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LITTLE BIG BOY

PARKING GARAGE PHOTO: RUBEN VORWALD - FOTOLIA.COM

COVER PHOTOS: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

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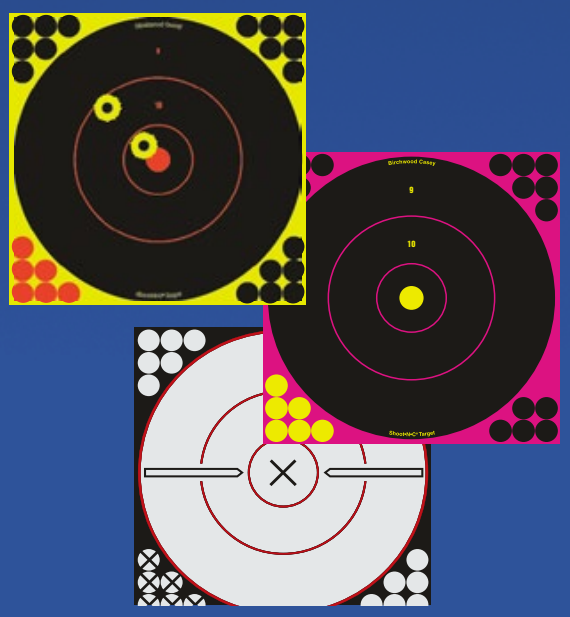


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CONTRIBUTORS
Tom Beckstrand, Richard King, Kyle Lamb, Lukas Lamb, Richard Mann, Philip Massaro, Richard Nance, Braxton Lee Petty, Alfredo Rico, Jeremy Stafford, Jason Teague, Sean Utley, Len Waldron

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR Elizabeth Carey

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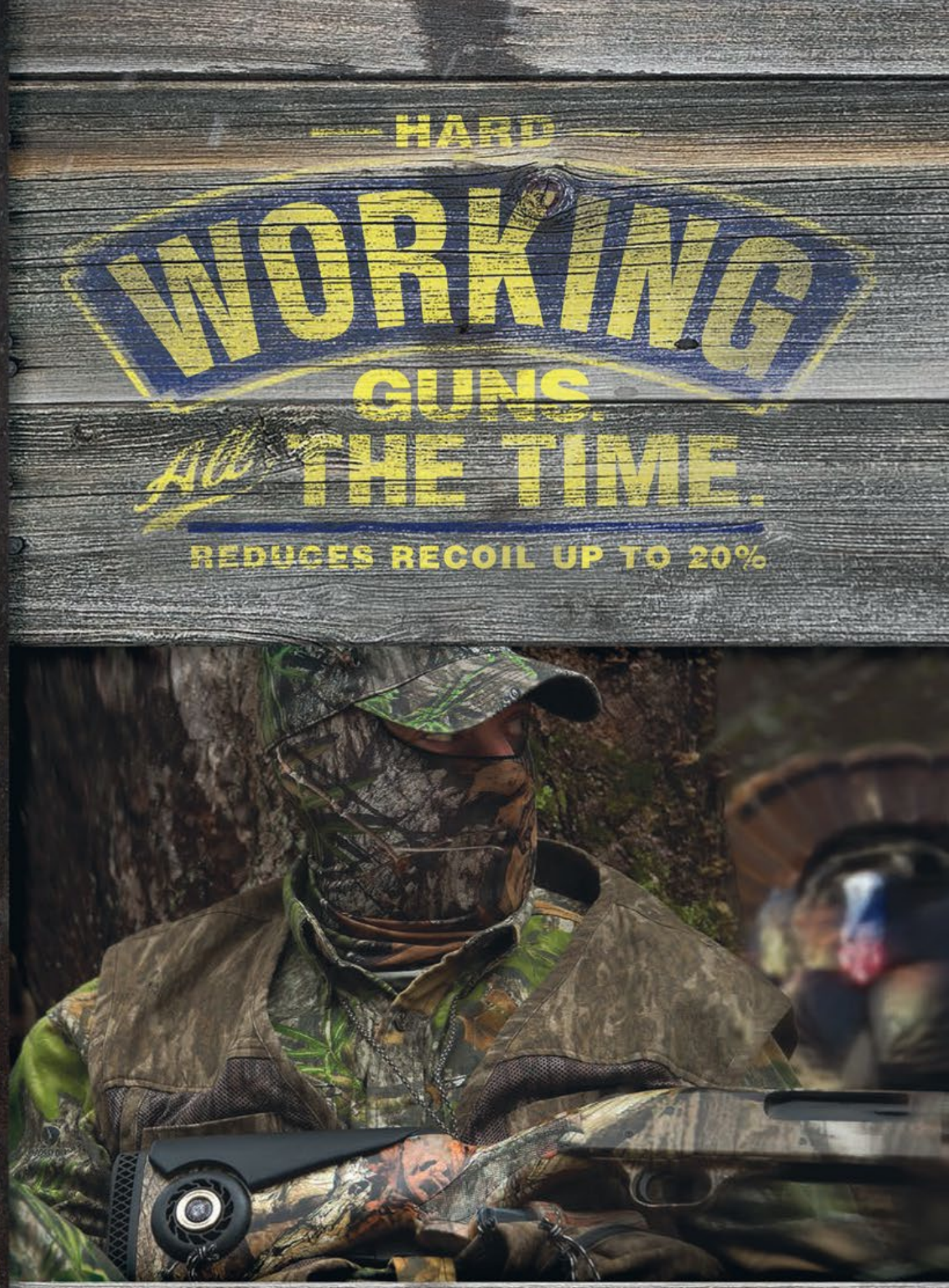
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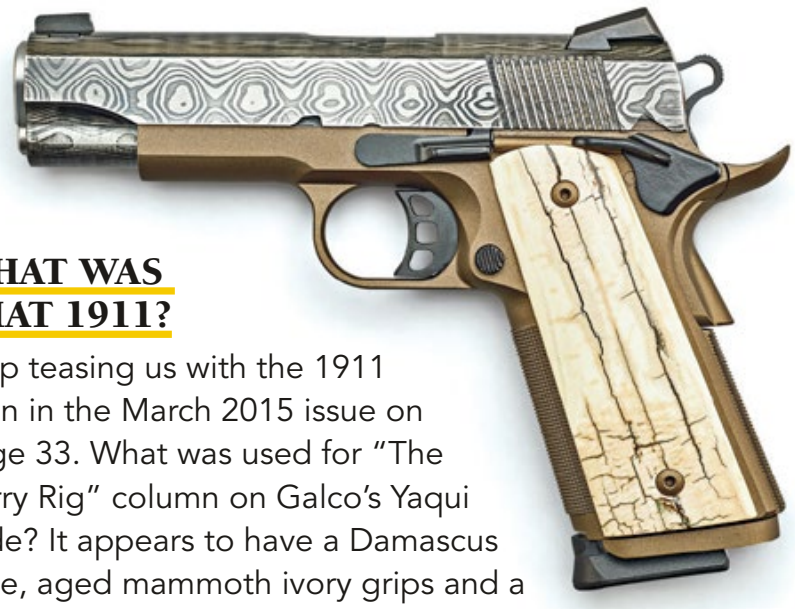
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WHAT WAS THAT 1911?

Stop teasing us with the 1911 seen in the March 2015 issue on page 33. What was used for "The Carry Rig" column on Galco's Yaqui Slide? It appears to have a Damascus slide, aged mammoth ivory grips and a few other goodies. I think an article on this pistol alone would be great.
Lt. Col. Bob Petersen, USAFR (Ret.)
Biloxi, Mississippi

Sir, that's my personal 1911 built by Jeff Meister, one of the artisans working for an up-and-coming company out of Texas named Republic Forge (republicforge.com). At your request, I'll publish a review soon. — E. Poole

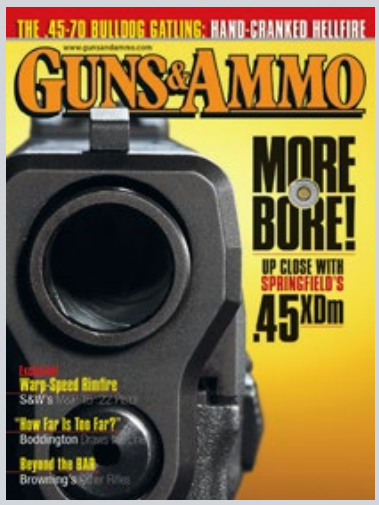
BAD HOLLYWOOD

In the film "American Sniper," former U.S. Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle, played by actor Bradley Cooper, is often seen working his scope's windage and elevation knobs once he has sighted in the rifle. Wouldn't this constant adjustment affect the original point of aim?
Howard Arnold
Grants Pass, Oregon

Nice catch on the scope work from "American Sniper." Making adjustments to the elevation turret is actually the historically correct representation of how Chris Kyle would have handled his scope during the time period depicted in the movie and would not damage the rifle's zero. SEALs during this time were still using second-focal-plane reticles and dialing elevation for each target they engaged. Once they zeroed their rifles at 100 yards, they would use the elevation turret to move the crosshairs to the correct position for any shots past that distance. Many "tactical" scopes are designed for this specific use and have no problem returning to their original zero. While the Nightforce scopes used by the SEALs in real life and

AUGUST '10

News of Springfield Armory's XDm featuring a 4½ barrel chambered for .45 ACP was announced on this cover of Guns & Ammo, where Patrick Sweeney unknowingly broke the company's tradition with a new XD introduction. After looking it over, Sweeney ran a few magazines through the two-digit serial-numbered pistol. Champion shooter Robbie Leatham commented, "I just realized, you're the first person outside of the factory to shoot the .45."



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in the movie can consistently return to zero after adjusting both the elevation and windage turrets, almost no trained snipers will dial windage for each shot. It is too time consuming, and wind constantly changes. With the elevation dialed on the scope, the horizontal crosshair and the subtension marks are most commonly used to hold off for wind. This method is both fast and precise. Besides the audible clicking heard when Bradley Cooper worked the power ring and the inaccurate "focus" function shown when the power ring was manipulated, the movie did a pretty good job of getting the guns, optics and gear correct for the time period represented. While Hollywood certainly took some liberties with the book, it did a good job with the firearms. — T. Beckstrand

PERSPECTIVES

I thoroughly enjoy every issue of Guns & Ammo magazine, reading it cover to cover. Although I lean toward traditional guns rather than modern guns, I enjoy keeping up with technology changes. I live behind enemy lines in New York State, and Guns & Ammo permits me to dream of the things that others enjoy so freely. For some time, I have read the snarky letters to the editor and wonder why obscure errors rise to the level of readers not renewing subscriptions. It seems that many simply walk around looking for things about which to become incensed. I learn something every time I read an issue and am never offended by a minor error. Guns & Ammo is much more fun to read than the local fish wrappers. Now, the SAFE Act merits a measure of anger, not this magazine. Let us develop some much needed perspective.

anonymous
email

G&A IS HARD TO READ

I have just finished my Feb. 2015 issue of Guns & Ammo. Keep up the good work! I enjoy your magazine each month and watch the mail for it, but since you "welcome suggestions" … . I just turned 68. Reading Feb.'s issue with even new glasses and bifocals was a strain. Check Garry James' "Italy's Underrated Carcano" article on page 82. Hell, even the page numbers are tiny. I subscribe to two monthly magazines, G&A and the NRA's American Rifleman. Comparing the fonts: They seem close to the same size, but the Rifleman's seems to be printed much darker, bolder and easier to read. Also check page 36, the detail index on the holster specs. I just about had to get out my magnifying glass to read them. I really like black print on white pages. When the black printing is on dark-colored pages, I have



trouble reading it. I won't get started on seeing pistol sights.
Steve Hessman
Springfield, Oregon

We're working on ways to improve readability, sir. You should start seeing changes in the next few issues.
— M. Ulrich, G&A art director

MARKING MAGS

I recently saw an advertisement featuring Kyle Lamb. He was holding a rifle with a marked mag sticking out. The markings are in bright yellow. What did he use to print his initials? Paint or marking fluid? It doesn't look like finger nail polish. It needs to be able to withstand light oils and grease. I, too, need to mark both rifle and pistol mags and want two or three colors to differentiate between calibers.
Jerry W. Lawson
Lewisville, North Carolina

I use a paint marker. I find that they work really well. If you rub the part with solvent, it will come off but not easily. These markers are usualy available at big box stores. I also use these to mark my scopes and sights to know which way to turn as well as where the zero was. This is an

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old Army habit of mine that still continues today.
— K. Lamb

RIGHT TO CHOOSE

As an 83-year-old codger, I am not particularly attracted to the AR platform. However, I will defend the right of other folks to own and read about these ARs and G&A's right to publish articles about, and advertisements for, such guns. I will even read articles about these modern firearms, since they clearly are the wave of the future. I might even decide I need one, if I live long enough. (Until about 10 years ago, I was convinced that semiautomatic rifles and pistols were not of interest to me, but I read all of the articles about them that appeared in my gun magazines. Guess what? My wife selected a 9mm Springfield XDm as her home protection firearm, and I have decided that I need a 1911 for the same purpose.) Perhaps if the whiners would only give ARs a chance — and read an article about them once in a while — they might begin to understand why so many people love that platform.

Richard Andrews
Youngsville, North Carolina

FACEBOOK

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The ATF is attempting to ban common M855 "green tip" AR-15 ammunition. Contact the ATF to make your voices heard!

2,848 Dale Stroud M855 Green Tip ... [There's] no data from Law Enforcement for support. Just an ammo ban because of the [recent] AR pistol developments.

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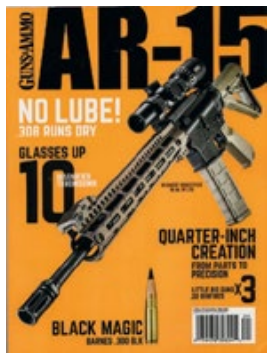
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MAGAZINE ON THE AR-15?

I am a subscriber to numerous monthly firearms publications, one of which is G&A. I appreciate the fine publication but would prefer to receive a magazine specifically covering the AR platform. For that reason, I am not renewing. I saw an ad in past publications referencing the black rifle, but I have not seen a monthly available on newsstands or online. If you are offering it, please let me know. Thanks, and be well.

Rich Colucci
email

Thank you for your support of Guns & Ammo magazine. Although we'd love to see you stay on as part of the G&A audience, I can refer you to Guns & Ammo's quarterly Book of the AR-15. It is not available for subscription. However, you can order single issues and back issues by calling 800-260-6397 or visiting store.intermediaoutdoors.com. Each issue costs $10 online (including shipping and processing) or $8.99 at newsstands. — Eds

FRIENDS OF FREEDOM

I would like to see more pieces on public figures who are pro-gun and pro-freedom. The press already prints articles about some of the worst enemies to American values.

Andy Breglia
Fremont, California

MORE BLACKOUT, PLEASE

I've been a subscriber to G&A for about three months, and it has quickly become one of my favorite firearm publications. Before I shipped to Parris Island after enlisting in the Marine Corps, I bought myself a 5.56 Windham Weaponry AR-15 and love it. I've since learned about the .300 Blackout round and have been pondering the idea of buying an upper receiver, but I wouldn't say I'm well versed enough





to simply drop that much money on half of a rifle. I would love to see an article on this round and its applications.

Matthew Goodwin
North Augusta, South Carolina


GUN NOTES

The wonders of walnut.

STOCK OPTIONS

LETTERS FROM KEITH

STOCK WOOD

In over 50 years of reading most gun rags, the accumulated total knowledge imparted to me on the merits of walnut for gunstocks is much less than that provided by Craig Boddington's column "Stock Options" in the recent December issue of G&A. Boddington's clarifying information about origin and types of walnut is spot-on based on my 40 years of walnut husbandry and timber growing. Here are some omissions, however:

Native to America in addition to black walnut are butternut and pecan. They are both in shorter supply, but they have slightly finer straight grains than black walnut. Butternut is almost totally exterminated, but its wood is lighter and creamy. Pecan is lighter brown than black walnut, sometimes tan with overtones of cedar hues. It is luxurious by any measure, but usable lengths of lumber are only found in deep forests rather than the hybridized stock raised in groves for nut production.

The Asian Heartnut has been introduced into this country for commercial purposes and morphed into an invasive species, occasionally crossing with native butternut and less frequently with black walnut. Lumber or wood is similar to Circassian (so-called English) walnut and a little lighter colored for most people who like blonde maple.

Some of the finest figure with spangling and feathering occurs below the hole of the tree stump in the knee of the outer stabilizing roots due to the weight of the tree compressing the grain proportionally higher than in the larger mass of the trunk, thus torturing the grain.

Dave Nicholas
Peebles, Ohio

EXCELLENT ISSUE

Mr. Poole, I thought your editorial explaining a writer's test conditions and limits was very important. Too many readers think of writers having ideal conditions all the time, all the ammunition and test facilities imaginable to create their articles. The best article in the magazine, however, was your review of the Yaqui Slide holster in "The Carry Rig" column. This is the first set of photos I have seen in 20 years that shows the holster design from all sides. I also enjoyed the history on Jeff Cooper and his Latin American missionary days bringing the good word on modern pistolcraft to our neighbors. Last, that was a wonderful photo of Gert Backstrom on the last page's "Spent Cases." She was a great pistol shot.

Don Johnson
Seattle, Washington


Britain's Mark III SMLE

BRITISH .303 RIFLES

They always said the German Mauser was the best sporting rifle, the U.S. M1903 Springfield the best target rifle and the British MK III and IV the best combat rifles. I've had them all, and that seems to be true. Garry James' article on these rifles in the December issue was great. He mentioned difficulty with stripper clips. There is a greater issue than that, especially for the handloader: They are hard on brass. This is no problem for the British military because they usually only fire the case once, whereas the handloader likes to get at least 10 or 12 firings out of an empty case. The inherent problem lies with case separation after one or two firings. Even with neck sizing of the case, regardless of the manufacturer, neck sizing helps. The real problem is with the rifles themselves, as they were built to wartime tolerances. A long base-to-shoulder chamber length is probably at fault. There is no real answer with the exception of rebarreling, and no one wants to do that to an original.

Paul Wasmuth
Kettering, Ohio

RIFLES THAT WON WARS

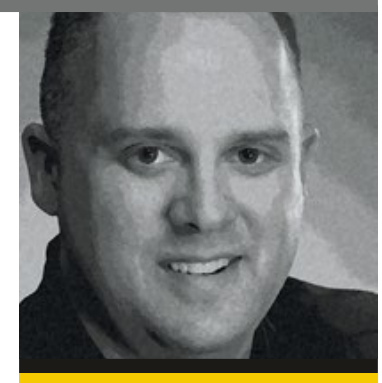
Hats off to Chase Ashley in the February issue of G&A for clearly exposing the utter inadequacy of the AR as our standard military rifle. I'm an old veteran and used a .30-'06 M1 Garand. I believe that rifle is a major reason why we defeated Germany and Japan in World War II. The .223 caliber is great for prairie dogs and maybe even rockchucks, but as a serious military rifle it is pathetic. Any deer hunter who enters the woods with a big, heavy, black, clumsy rifle with a 15- or 20-round magazine is someone to be pitied.

Stanley Bickel
Ammon, Idaho G&A

OOPS, OUR BAD

On page 88 of Guns & Ammo's March 2015 feature "Hey, Mr. Rifleman," which was authored by Layne Simpson, a paragraph in the article reads, "An Australian friend tells me the semiautomatic Remington 7600 in .35 Whelen is a favorite in his country … ." In fact, the Model 7600 was a pump-action rifle, not semiautomatic. I consulted Simpson's submission and found that his original draft was written correctly, and this description was changed at some point during G&A's editorial process. I'd like to offer my personal apology to all readers as well as the author for not catching this mistake before the issue went to press.
— E. Poole

*"The Aimpoint red dot just **turned 40.**"*



ERIC R. POOLE

@BLACK5PROJECTS

STILL SEEING RED

THE RED DOT WAS INVENTED to support the hobby of a Swedish engineer named Gunnar Sandberg 40 years ago. He was the owner of GS Development, whose primary business supported the medical industry, but his personal time was spent moose hunting, where he desired a faster optic. Gunnar discovered that if he could keep both eyes open, the red dot aiming point appeared on the target. A simple zero-magnification lens arrangement meant there was also no parallax. If the red dot was sighted in and on target, a hit was guaranteed regardless of eye position. Magnified optics have their role, but as it turns out, a red dot is hard to beat for multiple targets, moving targets and targets positioned within 100 yards.

Aimpoint's first red dot sight hit the European market in 1975. It was called the Aimpoint Electronic. Four years later, the second-generation (G2) model made its way to the U.S., with some needed improvements. Although created for hunting, it was competition that put it on the map, starting when pistol champ Joe Pascarella won Camp Perry with one in 1981.

Subsequent models were improved to address battery life, mounting options and durability under recoil. The U.S. Army's Delta unit selected Aimpoint for its new M4 carbines in time for Operation Desert Storm, and unit members assigned to guard General Norman Schwarzkopf were sometimes seen using the then-new Aimpoint 5000.

Today, Aimpoint is one of several companies owned by Per Sandberg, Gunnar's son. If you had joined me on my trip to tour Aimpoint, you would have thought you were entering a clinical laboratory.

The southern city of Malmö, just a 5-mile drive over the Örsund Bridge from Copenhagen, Denmark, is actually the home of one of two Aimpoint factories. The other is above the Arctic Circle in a town named Gällivare.

"We're going to teach you how to manufacture a PRO today," said Erik Äs, engineer at Aimpoint in Malmö.

The best-selling PRO comes standard with a pre-installed QRP2 mount. It's dialed in for windage and elevation on a top-secret fixture at the factory. Experience gained from earlier models revealed that improper installation often meant the optic could twist in its rings, leaving adjustments off and at an angle. The PRO solves this.

I learned that while most of the components that go into an Aimpoint are manufactured in Sweden, the all-important glass is sourced from Denmark and central Europe. Nothing comes from China, and Aimpoint refuses to sell its products there for reasons I'll detail shortly.



At Malmö, Aimpoint sights are assembled in a clean room, which requires wearing sterile, anti-electrostatic garments. Before employees sit down to work, they first attach a tethered grounding wire to a snap on a wristband to protect the circuitry.

Erik wouldn't tell me how many red dot sights a technician could assemble during a shift, so there was no benchmark for me to beat. That was a good thing, since it took me two days to build a single PRO. Even then, my sample didn't meet quality-control standards. (Apparently, I can't apply an even amount of glue in a straight line.) To be sure that my Aimpoint PRO wouldn't wind up in a retail environment, they engraved my name on it in place of a serial number and wrote it off as a souvenir.

My work did stand up to function testing at an underground range complete with electronic scoring, however. Shooting RUAG green tip through a select-fire HK416, my best five-shot group measured 1.34 inches.

China has reverse engineered many of Aimpoint's products, but it can't duplicate the processes, coatings and specialized fixtures developed by hard-earned experience.

You look at something a little differently when you know how it's made. I sat with company president Lennart Ljungfelt at his Malmö office and examined "pirated" red dots. He has several examples unwitting buyers had sent back to the factory for warranty repair. It was obvious to me that these were counterfeits; some wore the Aimpoint brand, some even spelled incorrectly. These were all from China. My advice: Avoid alternatives that *look* like an Aimpoint. G&A

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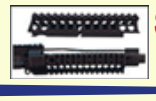
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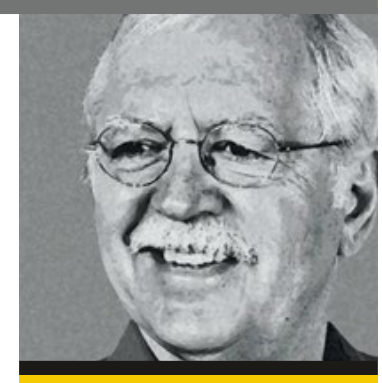
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*"Many thanks for the added info. I think we can **finally** put this controversy to bed."*

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WALTHER P.38 (BYF-44, STANDARD ISSUE), 98%: $750

P.38 REPAIR/ID

Q: My friend has a P.38 that his uncle brought back from World War II. I convinced him that we should take the P.38 to the range and put a few rounds through it to ensure that it was still in working condition. Firing the first round was like firing a new gun; it was magnificent. On the third round, I heard a nose that reminded me of the sound an M1 Garand clip makes when ejected. I found that the firing pin and indicator cover had blown off, and the rear sight was gone. We looked around but were unable to find the sight. I would like to get the pistol repaired, so I am looking for a gunsmith who knows about P.38s. We would also appreciate any information you can provide us about this pistol. I would rate it as in NRA very good condition, at least. There is a holster that shows wear but still works for protecting the gun. On the left side of the pistol and toward the front of the slide is stamped "P.38" followed by "byf" over the number 44. A little farther back, just in front of the safety lever, is the serial number 69XX with a space, then a "y." Farther down on the frame, even with the front of the triggerguard, is the serial number 69XXy (same spacing) followed by what looks like a tri-plane over "WaA" and I believe the number 135 (it might be 155; I'm not sure). On the front of the pistol where the barrel assembly meets flush with the frame is the serial number 69XX; the "y" is below the number. On the right side of the slide in line with the front of the grip panel are three stampings. The first and last appear to be a "W" with two lines drawn to either side like the wings of a biplane. The middle stamp appears to be the Nazi swastika with the eagle above it. The only other markings are on the magazine, which has "P.38" on the left side.

D.T.B.
Lancaster, California

A: *There are probably a number of gunsmiths out there qualified to fix your pistol, though one I am familiar with is Krausewerke (650-571-7583, krausewerke.com). It specializes in German handguns (and even makes superb copies of the .45 ACP Luger and Baby Luger). If it can't perform the job for you, I'm sure it can give you a good lead where to go to have it done. Your P.38 sounds pretty straightforward. Its maker's code and waffenamt (135) indicate that is was manufactured by Mauser in 1944. These are wonderful pistols, great to collect and shoot, and well worth restoring.*

THE AUCTION BLOCK

A spectacular highly desirable cased Gabbett-Fairfax Mars Model 1905 pistol sold for a remarkable $63,250, including premiums, at the October 7, 2014, James D. Julia auction. This rare early British automatic in .360 caliber is in superb condition, exhibiting 95 to 97 percent of its original bright-blue finish. It is enclosed in an oak case with a special compartment for the gun's magazine, as the pistol will only fit in its allotted space with the magazine removed. In the early part of the 20th century, the Gabbett-Fairfax was the most powerful auto of its time. For more information about this and future auctions, contact James D. Julia, 207-453-7125, jamesdjulia.com.



REMINGTON NYLON 10

Q: I have a single-shot bolt-action Remington Nylon 10. I have done some research and found that only about 10,000 were made. The thing that has me confused is that I don't see proof that any were made with a stainless/chrome barrel like this one. The only markings on the barrel are "P J 58 22" (the words "Short, Long, Long rifle" seem to be scratched off). It shoots all three cartridges. This gun was given to me 15 years ago, and from what I understand, some collectors have developed an interest in the Nylon.

J.V.
email

HAVE AN HEIRLOOM? Curious about a vintage firearm? Email Garry at **garry.james@imoutdoors.com**, or send a description with detailed photos to **Gun Room, Guns & Ammo, 2 News Plaza, 3rd Floor, Peoria, IL 61614**. Please include your name and state of residence.

Due to the volume of requests each month, personal replies are not possible. The most interesting or unusual queries are answered in Guns & Ammo magazine.



RECOMMENDED READS

"The Western Front Companion," by Mark Adkin, Stackpole Books, 2013, 528 pages

With the centenary of World War I upon us, Mark Adkin's spectacular new book, "The Western Front Companion," like his other excellent "Companions," which cover Waterloo, Trafalgar and Gettysburg, is a compendium of military history, biography and armament that has the dual achievements of putting the conflict into perspective for those unfamiliar with the events of 1914 to 1918 and embellishing the knowledge of veteran Great War buffs. Chock full of wonderful new and period illustrations, organizational charts and battle maps, this 350,000-word work is a must-have for any military library. It is every bit as detailed and authoritative as his other three efforts, which are also highly recommended. Available from Stackpole Books, 800-732-3669, stackpolebooks.com. $70

CHERRY 1911



COLT 1911, 80 – 90%, $1,750 – $2,100

Q: I may be able to buy a U.S. Army Colt Firearms Model 1911 .45-caliber pistol from the family of a World War II serviceman. The serial number is between 190,000 and 199,000. I believe the Colt Firearms website dates its manufacture to the year 1916. It's in very good (not mint) condition and was seldom used and never, to the family's knowledge, in combat. The serviceman, now deceased, was a combat photographer with the USMC and reportedly carried two such pistols (one on each hip) through the Central Pacific Drive to Japan (no one has knowledge of what happened to the second pistol). The serviceman made first-wave landings on Iwo Jima, Saipan, the Philippines and other islands. He wore it on his hip in a U.S. "42 Boyt" leather holster, which the family still has. It, too, is in very good condition. The Colt was found among his effects after he passed, loaded with six rounds of 1943-stamped .45 ACP ammunition. It was issued to him in '42, and it may be that the last time he used it was to qualify with it in training. He brought it home, put it away in a dresser and never used it again. It was not fired again till 2008, after first being taken apart and checked out. There is very little wear inside, according to the gunsmith, who said maybe 100 to 200 rounds had ever been fired through it. There is no sign of combat use such as wear or abrasion (from the volcanic and coral sands of the Pacific Islands or the trenches of France in WWI) on the inside or outside. Any idea of its value?

Michael
email

A: *Sounds like a nice piece. The serial-number range you note places the gun's date of manufacture in 1917. It certainly has a great story, and it would be nice if you could get some documentation (letter, photos, etc.) on the gun's ownership. In any event, a 1917-year Colt in 80 to 90 percent condition is worth in the $1,750 to $2,100 range.*

A: *The Remington Nylon 10 was one of a series of "Zytel" nylon-stocked .22 rifles, which included (among others) the Nylon 66 semiauto, Nylon 76 lever action and Nylon 10 (single-shot), and Nylon 11 (box magazine) and Nylon 12 (tubular magazine) bolt actions. A total of 8,606 Nylon 10s were manufactured from 1962 to 1964. Standard finish was blue. I must admit I've not seen any chrome versions, but as some chromed Nylon 66s were produced, it is not inconceivable that some 10s were also offered in that finish, though I cannot find reference to any. According to the "Thirty-Fifth Anniversary Edition Blue Book of Gun Values" (bluebookofgunvalues.com), a standard Nylon 10 with a 19⅝-inch barrel in 90 percent condition is worth $400, and one with a 24-inch barrel would be $200 more.*

MUMMIFIED MAS 36

Q: This is my first writing to any gun publication in more than 40 years. I purchased a MAS 36 when they hit the market some 15 years ago. Through all these years, I've never taken off the rust-protective wrap. It's been in my collection with the wound-up grease-impregnated cloth. My question is, as a collector's item, does this gives it any value? I have no idea what condition this rifle is in, but I do know the value of this rifle depending on condition. Am I better off just removing the wrap?

J.K.
Niles, Illinois

A: *There are some out there who eschew removing the armory wrappings from mili-*

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WINCHESTER MODEL 1876, 50+%: $3,500 – $5,000

tary arms, but I'm not one of them. True, a MAS 36 is not in the M1 Garand class in the desirability department (though I must admit I have a MAS and enjoy shooting it immensely), but even so, it doesn't seem to me that it is achieving its potential encased in a gunked-up protective shroud concealing both the rifle's mystique and its utility. It's aesthetically displeasing to boot. Now, I suppose if one were going to do a display of a particular military rifle and had a number of variations to exhibit, there might be some excuse for wanting to show this particular part of the arm's history, but even then I think it's something of a stretch. I would be interested in hearing other opinions, though.

WINCHESTER MODEL 1876

Q: I have a rifle that belonged to my grandfather and was given to me by my uncle. It has written on the barrel "Winchester Repeating Arms New Haven Ct. Kings Improvement Patented Mar. 29, 1866-Oct. 16, 1860." It doesn't have the caliber written anywhere, but my uncle told me that it is a .45-75. The serial number is 11XX. Could you give some history on this gun and the approximate value?
L.R.
email

A: *From your photo, it looks like you have a Winchester Model 1876 rifle. You should take it to a gunsmith and have a chamber cast made to determine the caliber. The Model 76 was Winchester's attempt to beef up the Model 1873 to handle larger, more powerful loads. In fact, it looks just like a Model 73 on steroids. Mechanically, the guns were similar, though there were a few differences. Model 1876s (which I must admit I'm rather partial to) were manufactured from 1876 to 1896 in .40-60 WCF, .45-60 WCF, .45-75 WCF (the most common) and .50-95 Express. There were a number of variations. Your '76 looks like a First Model rifle that, based on its serial number, was built in the first year of production. Condition looks about average-plus, so I'd place its value in the $3,500 to $5,000 range.*

MORE ON VIETNAM .38 SPC S&Ws

Q: In the January 2015 issue, a reader queried about a .38 Special revolv-



er carried by helicopter crews during Vietnam. Although your answer is correct, to elaborate a bit, I believe the reader was referring to the S&W Model 13 revolver. This was a lightweight Model 10 with a 2-inch barrel and round butt (semi-round as per K-frame models). I always felt that this configuration made for a great carry revolver. I had one years ago, but unfortunately I lost it to theft. It was a great revolver, maybe the most accurate .38 Special I ever had. I don't know if mine had a trigger job done to it prior to my owning it, but I do remember its trigger pull being sweet.

E.M.
Guatemala City, Guatemala

A: *Many thanks for the added info. I think we can finally put this controversy to bed.*

COLT FITZ SPECIAL

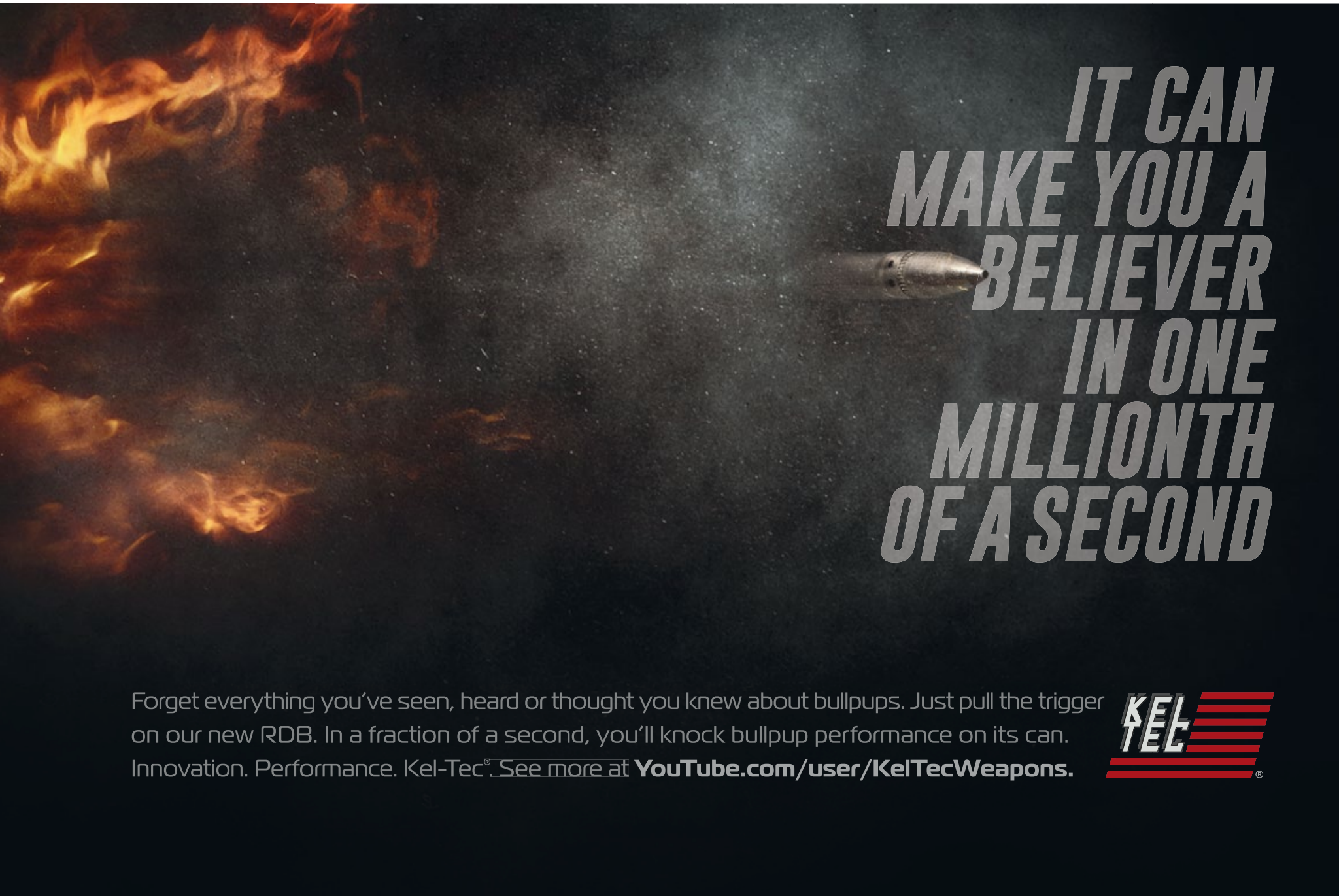
Q: I think I may have a Fitz Special. It is a Colt revolver, blued in .38 Special with wood grips. The serial number on the frame is 312XXX with a "P" centered below the serial number. The serial number on the cylinder matches. How can I document whether it is a Fitz?

P.H.
email

A: *"Fitz Special" revolvers were Colts that were modified as per the design of John Henry Fitzgerald, a competition shooter and all-around pistolero who worked for Colt from 1918 to 1944. The Fitzgerald Special involved trimming a revolver's (normally a Police Positive, though a couple of New Services were also modified) barrel down to about 2 inches, rounding the butt, bobbing the hammer and cutting away the front of the triggerguard. Around 20 were actually built by Colt, and if you contact people at the Archive Services (800-962-2658, ext. 1343), they will tell you how you can get a letter on your particular revolver. Fitzgerald also built some himself, as did other gunsmiths, though those will not letter out and can be difficult to authenticate.* G&A



COLT FITZ SPECIAL .38 SPL





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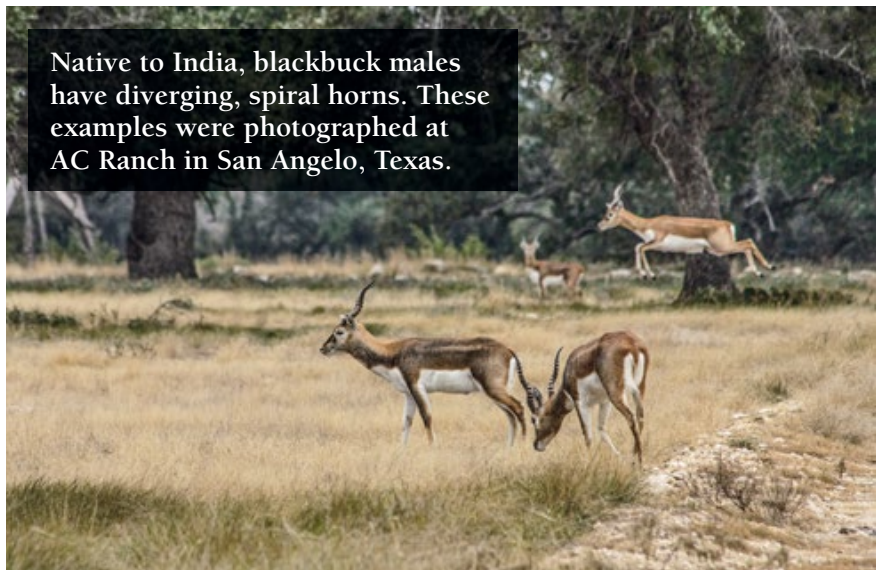


CRAIG BODDINGTON

/OFFICIALCRAIGBODDINGTONPAGE

AMERICAN IMPORTS

THE WORD "EXOTIC" is scientifically correct, defining a plant or animal that is not native to a given area and thus got there either accidentally or on purpose. Unfortunately, for many hunters, "exotic" carries a negative connotation, somewhat tainted by a hint of high fences. This doesn't necessarily apply. For instance, what about the ring-necked pheasant? The pheasant is probably America's most important upland game bird today, and I'm amazed that so many people don't know that the first pheasants were brought in from China only a century ago. Other important exotic game birds include the chukar and Hungarian partridge.



Native to India, blackbuck males have diverging, spiral horns. These examples were photographed at AC Ranch in San Angelo, Texas.

What about wild hogs? Although sometimes called Russian wild boars and other fancy names, wild hogs in North America are simply feral pigs, though some areas have a strong influence from releases of genuine Eurasian wild boars. They have now been sighted in all states except Alaska, with current population estimates as high as 9 million. They are changing America's hunting scene because they offer opportunity. The vast majority are free-ranging, increasing annually in range and numbers, and landowners hate them. They're tough on crops, and their rooting is hard on the land, with agricultural damages from hogs approaching $2 billion. Landowners who won't allow other hunting often welcome pig hunters.

Without question, the epicenter for non-native big game is the Texas Hill Country, where many ranches are stocked with a wide variety of species. It is absolutely true that the more rare varieties are often taken more as a collection than a hunt. However, the most common species such as axis deer, aoudad sheep, blackbuck, fallow deer, mouflon and sika deer are generally free-ranging on large acreage. These animals have been breeding in Texas for a long time. Over the years, there have been escapees, and all four of these also occur in a genuine free-range situation. Either way, they offer an enjoyable hunting experience, often during times when native seasons are not open. Horned animals such as aoudad, blackbuck and mouflon can be hunted year-round. The axis is a tropical deer that keeps an unusual schedule. Some individuals can be found in hard antler in any month, but the majority come into hard antler in May, with the rut in June and July. The axis deer could well be the most beautiful deer in the world, offering a wonderful off-season adventure.

The aoudad is a special case. In the heavy oak brush of the Hill Country, they are very difficult to hunt, whether on a game ranch or free range, but they are originally creatures of the arid mountains of North Africa. Today, they are widely distributed and totally free-ranging in the mountains of West Texas, including the Glass, Davis and Chinati Mountains, and the Palo Duro Canyon up toward the Panhandle. This is harsh country, but I hunted aoudad, also called Barbary sheep, in Chad, on the southern fringe of the Sahara. Nothing in North America is nearly as harsh, and our aoudad grow much larger than their African ancestors. They are my favorite non-na-



AOUDAD: CHONLAWIT – FOTOLIA.COM

Hunting free-range aoudad in West Texas and New Mexico is a genuine sheep hunt, not much different than hunting desert bighorns but at a fraction of the cost.

LETTERS FROM KEITH

"To be an all-around rifle for either the Americas or Africa and India, the cartridge must be large enough for the largest game to be hunted."
— *Elmer Keith, January 1968*





New Mexico's scrub desert, where gemsbok roam, looks a whole lot like this species' native Kalahari region in Africa.

tive animal to hunt, and in mountainous country they offer a genuine sheep-hunting experience at a fraction of the cost of any North American sheep hunt. Unlike most of these animals, they are not found just in Texas. Aoudad are in several areas in New Mexico, and there's a population in the mountains of California's Central Coast. I heard that there's even a free-ranging population in Oregon.

The nilgai is another interesting Texas exotic. A large antelope originally from India, it is a tropical animal that can't withstand prolonged cold. There are thousands of them free-ranging along the Texas Gulf Coast, but they haven't expanded inland because the winters rapidly become too harsh. Nilgai were cheated in the horn department. They're thick skinned and incredibly tough, yet they offer some of the finest venison.

New Mexico actually has several interesting non-natives. Hunter and naturalist Frank Hibben headed up the New Mexico game commission for some years. He believed in habitat niches, areas that weren't suitable to native species but where introduced species might do well. He experimented with several species, some of which didn't thrive, but this is why we have gemsbok from southern Africa in New Mexico's White Sands region, Persian ibex in the Florida Mountains and aoudad here and there, all huntable. I got a permit for an oryx a couple of years ago, and it was a wonderful hunt. The scrub desert looked exactly like the Kalahari, and the animals were clearly perfectly at home.

There are actually non-native populations of this and that scattered around the continent. There are several pockets of fallow deer, often an insider's deal with locations carefully guarded. European reindeer can be hunted on Alaska's Kodiak Island and the southern coast of Greenland, originally introduced in both places as an alternative food source. Maryland's



NILGAI: DUBULTS – FOTOLIA.COM

A large antelope native to India, the nilgai is free-ranging along much of the Texas Gulf Coast.

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Eastern Shore holds several thousand sika deer, mostly in Dorchester County, apparently descended from an accidental release. As the story goes, a barge carrying sika deer (for an unknown reason) ran aground, and several deer escaped. The sika is a small, three-tined, round-antlered deer native to Japan and eastern Asia of the same *Cervus* genus as our elk. In Maryland's coastal marshes, they're the very devil to hunt. In 2013, I went during the October rut, archery season. They don't bugle like elk; they whistle and scream, and it was a marvelous experience.



The feral hog is unquestionably America's most numerous and widespread non-native, with sightings in every state except Alaska and a population estimated as high as 9 million.

Another interesting opportunity was hunting sambar along California's Central Coast. Publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst once owned much of this country, and he experimented with numerous species. Not all thrived, but there are known populations of aoudad, Himalayan tahr and sambar, and once in a while a rancher or deer hunter bumps into a zebra. The sambar, native to India, is also a *Cervidae*, but it is a large and powerfully built animal. Exactly how many there are is unknown.

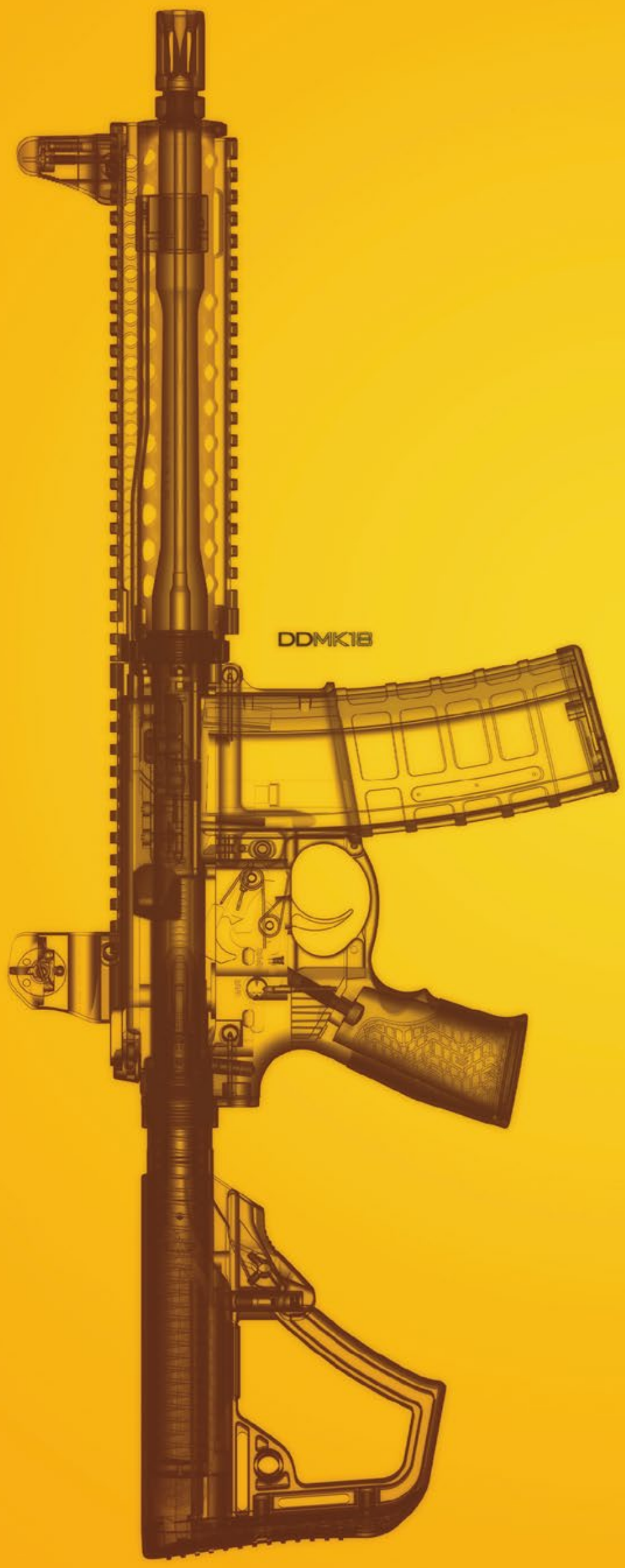
We humans have been manipulating nature for so many centuries that every continent has a complement of exotic species. In some areas, they are very important. All of Hawaii's hunting is for non-native animals, with the menu including axis and blacktail deer, European mouflon, and feral sheep, goats and pigs, along with exotic game birds. Virtually all of the big-game hunting in Australia and New Zealand is for introduced species, and the large majority of Argentina's huntable species are introduced.

At this time, none of our American exotics rivals our native species in numbers or hunter interest, except for wild hogs. While I think the hunting opportunity they offer is a good thing, they're changing our landscape and hunting culture. For sure, it's too late to put the genie back in the bottle, so we might as well enjoy the ride. G&A

FERAL HOG: TETELINE – FOTOLIA.COM



DD MK18 SBR
2015



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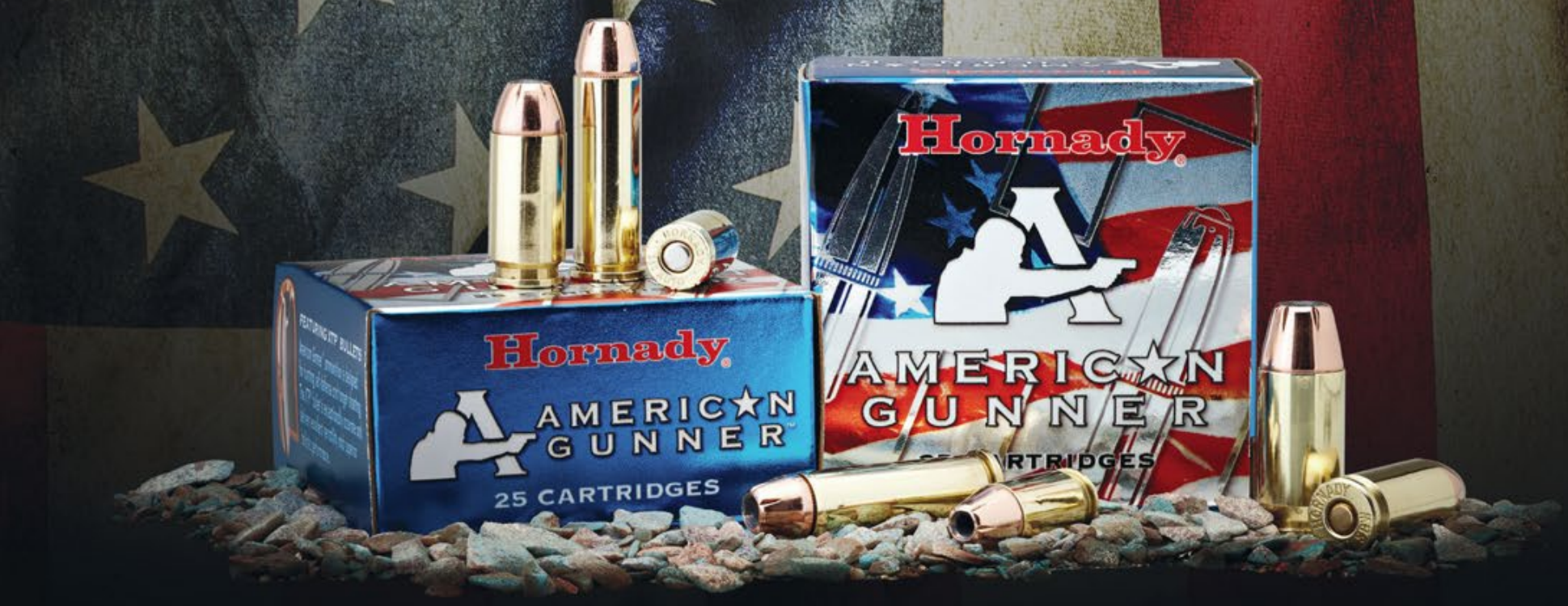
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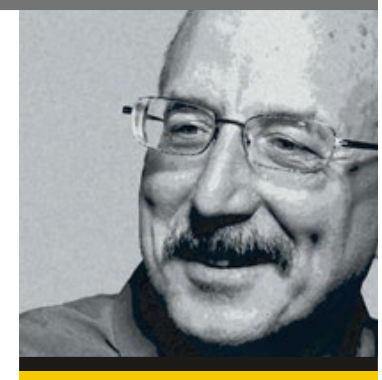
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*"All **red dots** in those days had an appetite for batteries ..."*

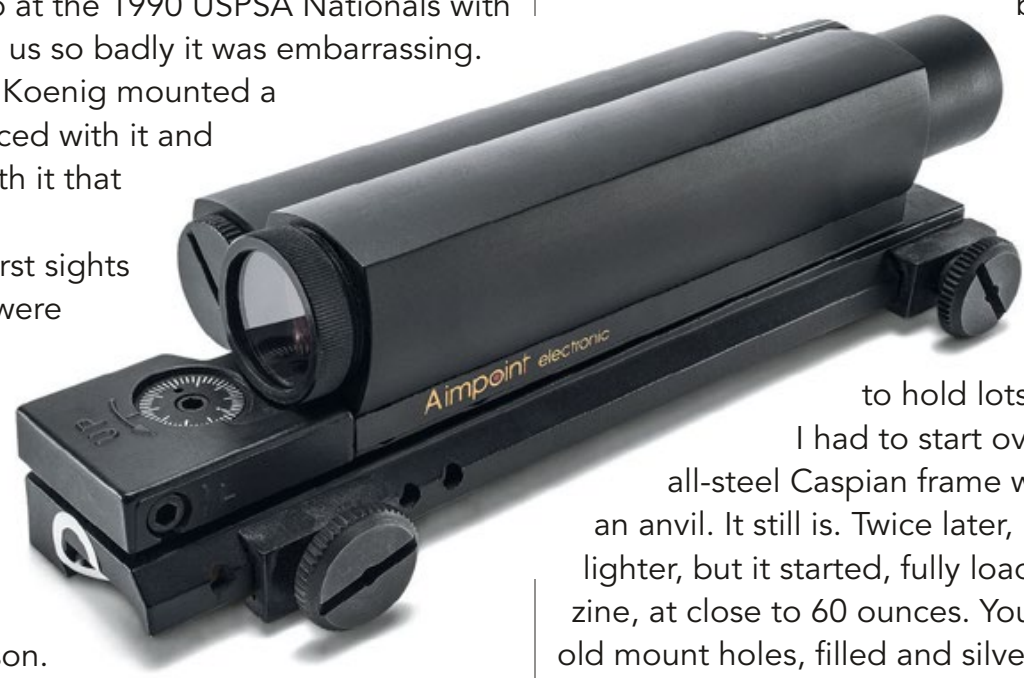


PATRICK SWEENEY

PROGRESS MARCHES ON

OUR EDITOR, Eric Poole, made the mistake of asking me an open-ended question: "What do you remember about the early use of red dot sights in IPSC?" I had to manfully resist the temptation to launch into full lecture mode. You see, I was there. Red dot sights were not new in the late 1980s; they had been around. The first-generation Aimpoint Electronic was a red dot originally meant for rifles in the late 1970s. However, in IPSC, Jerry Barnhart was the first to figure out how to use a subsequent model on a handgun. He showed up at the 1990 USPSA Nationals with a red dot sight and beat us so badly it was embarrassing. Two months later, Doug Koenig mounted a scope on his gun, practiced with it and won the World Shoot with it that same year.

Looking back, those first sights that followed Aimpoint were almost ludicrous. Field of view of the original Aimpoint we used, the third-gen Electronic, was narrow. It made current red dot tubes look like the Holland Tunnel by comparison. All red dots in those days had an appetite for batteries and offered only a dim, tiny dot that occassionally disappeared under recoil. However, when it worked and *you* worked, you were untouchable on the leaderboard.



We had just gotten to the point (1990) that most competitors had switched from .45 ACP to .38 Super (or some variant of it), and now this?

As I explained all this to Eric, I was fiddling with a new mini red dot sight that had just arrived. Out of curiosity, I tossed it onto a scale: 1.3 ounces. We would have killed for a red dot that light in the '90s, because the ones we used also needed a mount to attach them to the frame of the pistol. When combined with the mount to bolt them on, they weighed more than a pound. That's right; we were adding 16-plus ounces to 38-ounce pistols, and we were glad to do it.

I still have my 1991 Open competition gun. I built it on a very nice single-stack Colt chambered for .38 Super. I was already in the process of building it as an iron-sighted Open gun, but when red dots came out, that was that. I took off the rear sight (leaving the front sight on, as it wasn't in the way) and installed a mount and red dot. It was obsolete in less than two years, but back then two years was forever in R&D. I shot it with hardcast lead bullets of 150 grains, and I posted some pretty good scores in the 1991 nationals. Then the high-cap frames arrived. Suddenly, it wasn't enough to have an accurate, flat-shooting .38 Super with a red dot on it; your pistol had to hold lots of bullets.

I had to start over, and I built mine on an all-steel Caspian frame with an early mount. It was an anvil. It still is. Twice later, I changed mounts to get it lighter, but it started, fully loaded with a high-cap magazine, at close to 60 ounces. You can still see some of the old mount holes, filled and silver-soldered back closed.

Then magazines leapt up again. We went from 18 to 19 rounds to 27 because of a ruling on overall length. I had to invest in a pair of sacrificial magazines to have them cut, soldered together as one longer magazine, tuned, fitted.

By then, we were shooting 115-grain bullets at close to 1,550 fps, and everything was breaking. We wore out barrels fast. We loosened slide-to-frame fit in a season. Magazines needed constant tuning, and the scopes? To give you an idea of just how bad things were back in the development phase of IPSC competition, it was customary to have three guns: the game gun, the spare gun and the gunsmith gun. When the game gun wore out, broke, or was used up, you'd ship it back and rotate in the spares. You also had spare red dots in your bag because yours would quit at some point, inevitably during a stage.



COOPER ON HANDGUNS

"We never taught the machine pistol here at Gunsite … In my opinion it is a slob's weapon, useful only by half-trained or poorly motivated troops. It hits no harder than a pistol and is no more portable than a rifle. Fully automatic fire in a handheld weapon is doubtful business, useful only to use up ammunition unnecessarily." —*Jeff Cooper, March 2005*

PHOTOS: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ



Two of the author's purpose-built pistols used for IPSC competition during the early 1990s featured Tasco's red dot and the 5-MOA ProPoint, which are still available. $161

I have a clear memory of someone who was on my squad at the 1992 nationals. It was an open secret that he was a "secret squirrel" guy, but we didn't know just how secret. What we did know was that, like the rest of us, he had to dive into his gear bag to replace his red dot scope more than once in the course of the match. (He said so, repeatedly.) I had one durable enough, and even relatively light enough, but making it light had broken its weather seal, and when the humidity got too high I had to retire to a Safe Area to heat it with a Bic lighter to drive out the moisture. I've always had the impression that he was Randy Shugart, but since the shooter in question was a "no photos" guy, I don't have any proof of this. Alas, the match records didn't tell us who he was.

There was no question that the guys on the pointy end of the spear were, in some instances, IPSC competitors back then and heavy into the game-y gear, at least for experimentation.

Just to make our lives a little bit worse, the scope manufacturers were also learning and changing. You could figure out the best red dot and mount, and ship them to a gunsmith for assembly. By the time they got back, there was something better, sometimes both dot and mount, and you had the choice of reshipping with new gear or just shooting what you had until you could afford/justify the new dot and mount. Most of us just shot ours until it was clear that we were at a disadvantage, and then we bit the bullet and upgraded.

This went on for years as red dot optics went through generation after generation and mount makers cranked out design after design. Looking over Aimpoint alone, between 1987 and 2000 it had almost a dozen models you could choose from, some lasting only a couple of years in the lineup.

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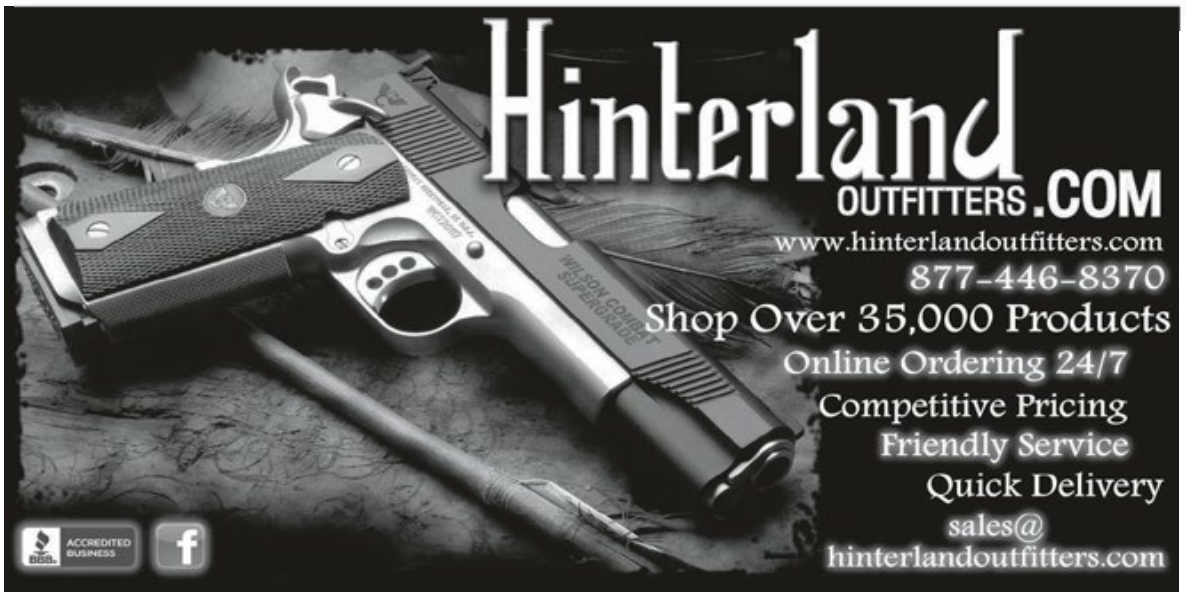
While this was going on, we were endlessly experimenting with bullets and powders, comp designs and recoil springs to find the fastest, flattest, softest load that improved our scores. By the time we were done, we had found combinations that didn't consume guns. You could go an entire competition season and not have to overhaul your game gun. Along the way, the red dots took it in the neck. The blast and vibration of an Open gun going off make for a harsh environment for a red dot scope. We just kept buying and breaking them, complaining and rebuilding them. We'd ship them back to the makers, the rebuild specialists, who would take them apart and resolder the joints. Springs and shock absorbers may have extended the life of a red dot, but the guns were too heavy already.

This churning of gear went on for quite a few years. Those of us who could build would simply stuff the old gun in the safe, build a new one and get back to shooting. Those who had to have them built usually had theirs overhauled and upgraded in the off-season.

My singe-stack got back into the mix after being replaced by the high-cap when I needed it for Second Chance. I took off the mount and scope and put the rear sight back on for the Handgun Pop-and-Flop. The tricky shot was the 90-yard bowling pin, and that Colt was like a laser. It won me loot in that event all three years it was held. Then I put the mount and scope back on just to keep from losing them.

I explain this to give you an idea of how wondrous it is to have a red dot sight for handguns that is so light that you can mount it directly to the slide, one durable enough to withstand the pounding, a combination so tough that it's now being considered as a suitable companion for daily carry and duty guns. So, when you see your new pistol, ready for a red dot to be mounted on it, thank old-time IPSC shooters. Their insistence on performance is what got us here. G&A







CHRIS MUDGETT
GAEDITOR@IMOUTDOORS.COM

*Are **micro dot sights** a window into our future?*



SMALLER, LIGHTER, TOUGHER

WE'VE GONE FROM MAMMOTH red dots seen on handguns as early as 1980 to this: the micro sight.

When Aimpoint developed its first red dot in 1975, it was just rugged enough to endure fair-weather trips to the hunting fields or quick target acquisition on the competitive playing field. Batteries were only expected to last a couple of hours, and there was always a chance that recoil was going to shake up fragile electrical connections on the inside and make the sight unusable.

Then, tritium-illuminated fiber optic technology came along by way of Trijicon's Armson OEG in 1981, which provided a reliable alternative to battery power, in some cases thereafter augmenting an electronic red dot. Trijicon's founder, Glyn Bindon, introduced us to the Bindon Aiming Concept, which made us realize that we didn't need to "see through" a tubular optic like a traditional scope but that our brains would supplant the image of the unit's illuminated reticle onto our sight picture when we kept both eyes open. The only advancements left to be made were in miniaturizing these 1-pound add-ons, making them more practical for use with guns and holsters.

It has taken 40 years, but we're starting to harness all the benefits afforded to us by microchips, metal alloys shaped by computer-aided machining given LED technology, solid-state electronics and long-lasting lithium batteries.

Will optically sighted handguns become the norm in our shooting future? Tell us at gunsandammo.com. G&A



Aimpoint
Micro T-1: A single battery lasts five years, thanks to advanced circuitry. $691



Burris
FastFire II: Has the lowest price of entry and a gasket-sealed bottom. $209



EOTech
Mini Red Dot Sight (MRDS): Officially adopted by SOCOM in 2008. $499



Leupold
DeltaPoint: Space-age magnesium-alloy housing and motion-sensor tech. $499



Trijicon
Ruggedized Miniature Red Dot (RMR): Also available with fiber optics. $708

PHOTOS: BRAXTON LEE PETTY



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The walnut color is a unique mixture of browns. A slight forward cant aids in concealability.





The Bull Hide Gun Belt is 1½ inches tall and a full quarter-inch thick. $54

WRIGHT LEATHER WORKS BANSHEE

WRIGHT LEATHER WORKS is a custom holster manufacturer based out of Green Springs, Ohio. Every holster is custom made, and each piece of material is handcut, sewn and molded from the highest-quality full-grain domestic hides and materials available. I carried the Banshee model and opted for the $50 Master Collection Upgrade, an option that adds a soft pigskin lining to the interior of the holster. The Banshee is a low-profile, pancake-style inside-the-waistband holster, and when paired with the slim frame of my M&P Shield with Trijicon HD night sights, it provided me with a very concealable package.

The Banshee is adjustable for cant and ride depth and designed to adjust to most body types and angle preferences. Two methods of belt attachments are available: high-ride leather straps and tuckable deep-concealment steel spring clips. I chose the latter due to the ease of obtaining a perfect fit and short amount of time needed to install and remove the holster from my belt. I tried the

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The color-matched Mag Clip Holster is easy to add or remove, thanks to its spring clip. Its full-body shield hugs the contour of your waistline and is tension adjustable for the right fit. $48





The Double Mag Pancake magazine pouch is designed for OWB wear and comfortably carries two spare magazines. $58

leather straps but found the fit to be somewhat cumbersome, and it allowed the holster to shift in height throughout the day. The spring clips were solid, and the Banshee remained in position even after a long day.

The holster itself was very tight fitting when it first arrived, and it clutched my Shield in a death grip when I initially inserted it. I ultimately placed the pistol in the plastic bag that the Banshee arrived in and reinserted the pistol into the holster, leaving it for about 72 hours. I checked the fitment every 10 to 12 hours until I was satisfied with the level of retention the holster provided. The Banshee has maintained this fit, staying tight over 30 days of carry. My preferred fit allowed for a smooth draw, and the cut of the holster permitted a full firing grip from the draw, helping my sights to naturally align upon press out.

The color of this holster is a unique shade of walnut, which is rich in detail and reminds me of creamy milk chocolate. The leather has the aroma of upscale luxury automobile leather, unlike the leather typically used in the construction of a holster. Wright Leather Works' stitching is without flaw, with close attention to detail. As an example, when the pistol is fully inserted into the holster, the stitching around the muzzle is within a centimeter or so of the end of the slide. Any closer and the insertion/extraction of



Wright Leather Works	**Banshee (right)**
Materials	Full-grain domestic leather
Carry Type	IWB
Retention Type	Level 1
Adjustability	Cant, height
MSRP	From $98
Handgun Fit	Smith & Wesson M&P Shield (tested); other models available
Accessory Rail Accommodations	None
Positions to Carry	On hip, behind hip
Average Time to Attach	45 seconds
Comfort Rating	4/5
Concealment Clothing	Untucked T-shirt, tucked-in button-down shirt
Average Draw-to-Fire Time	2.29 seconds
Manufacturer	Wright Leather Works, 419-307-6191, wrightleatherworks.com

Draw-to-fire time is the average of five clean draws from under a concealed garment, resulting in an A-zone hit on a stationary target positioned at 21 feet.



the pistol would eventually abrade the thread, but this will never be an issue with this design. The base of the holster is then tapered off a few centimeters after this stitching, ensuring that this package is only as long as it needs to be for all-day comfort.

I also evaluated the company's Bull Hide Gun Belt, which is a 1½-inch belt. I discovered that it would not fit a large range of 1½-inch belt loops found on many of the trousers I wear. This is due to the actual thickness of the belt, which measured a quarter of an inch. This made it impossible to thread the belt tail back through the first belt loop after clasping it through the buckle. This may not be an issue for most concealed carry users, but it's worth taking into account prior to purchase. Otherwise, the belt did an excellent job supporting the weight of my pistol and spare magazine carrier, never sagging or stretching. G&A

— Chris Mudgett





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(March/April 2015 issue)

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*"A sure way to start a fight with rifle shooters is to ask **how many rounds** should be fired for each group."*



TOM BECKSTRAND

ACCURACY TESTING, PT. 2

IN THE FIRST PART OF OUR ACCURACY-TESTING column (March 2015, pg. 37), we covered the importance of building a good shooting position and how we do it here at Guns & Ammo. In this second part, we're going to talk about how we select ammunition and other ancillary equipment in our quest to squeeze every last bit of accuracy.



The G&A staff favor match ammunition for quick and unbiased accuracy testing. It takes some thorough experimentation to find which factory hunting load a particular rifle likes best.

Ammunition We favor testing rifles with match ammunition because we often don't have the time to develop optimal handloads for each gun, and match ammunition is, by design, intended to shoot well out of most rifles. We see no need to penalize a rifle by testing it with hunting ammunition that it may not like and then publishing the accuracy data as a comprehensive indicator of how the rifle will perform. It is unfair for both the rifle and the ammunition.

The distance between the bullet's bearing surface and the rifling is one of the biggest contributing factors to how accurate that load will be. Some bullets want to just kiss the lands, and others want to be .080 inch away (or more) for optimal accuracy. Many bullets are temperamental this way and will only shoot well once we find the distance they like. For a personally owned rifle, the best bet is to buy different boxes of ammunition and see what does the best while still providing the terminal performance we need. This takes time and a wide variety of loads before we find what our rifle prefers.

We favor match ammunition because the bullet's ogive is shaped to efficiently center itself in the barrel's throat. If it enters the rifling straight, it will also exit the muzzle straight and give us the best accuracy. This is why bullet manufacturers spend so much time and effort making match bullets. They do well in a wide variety of chamber dimensions and are the fastest way to get a good idea of how a rifle will shoot without handloading.

The absolute best bullets to shoot in a rifle for a quick accuracy test are match bullets with a flat base. The flat base gives a nice, consistent surface for the gas to push against as opposed to the cone-shaped boattail. Short, flat base bullets are much less likely to yaw in the throat than the longer, heavier bullets with their aggressive boattails.

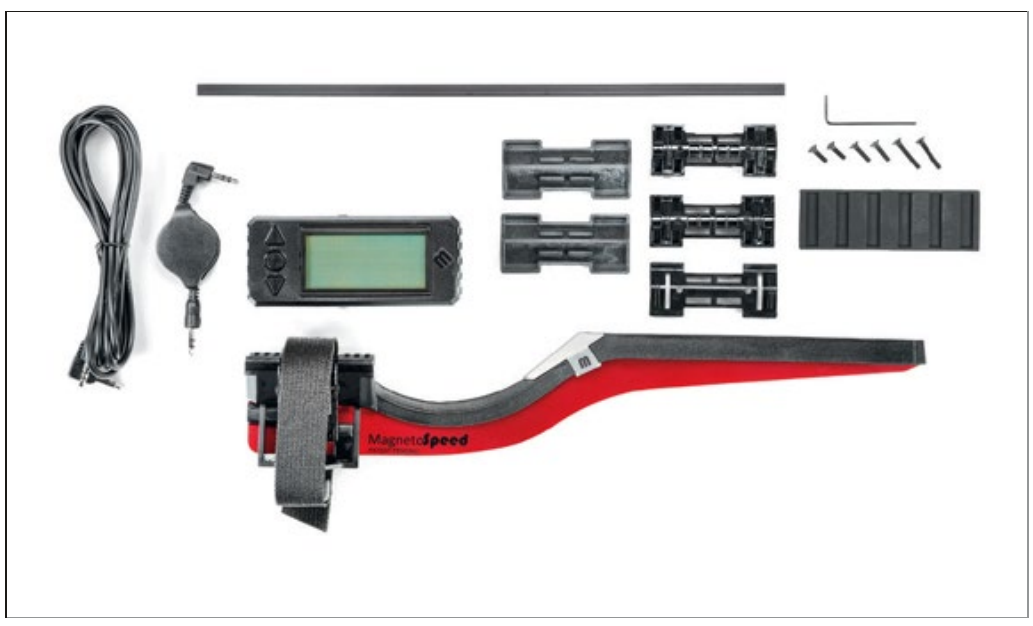
We publish group sizes, extreme spread (ES) and standard deviation (SD) for each load tested. Group sizes are a popular and easily quantifiable takeaway that would be foolish to exclude. Including ES and SD is also a common practice, but we do so in the hopes that the reader doesn't overvalue this information.

It's important to remember that a 100-feet-per-second increase in velocity will

PHOTOS: MARK FINGAR



The MagnetoSpeed chronograph attaches to the muzzle end of the barrel and uses electromagnetic disturbance to accurately measure velocity. It doesn't require bright light to work effectively.



The MagnetoSpeed chronograph has a bayonet, a display unit and a number of spacers to measure the proper distance from the bore's centerline axis. It's very easy to set up and use.



All MagnetoSpeed components fit into a small hard-case about the same size as those that are used to ship pistols.

only move a bullet's impact by about an inch at 350 yards. If you do most of your shooting inside 350 yards, don't sweat the ES and SD too much. In terms of rifle shooting, as much as I want to see low numbers in both of those categories, they really don't have much influence until we get out past 500 yards. We're better served by focusing our effort on finding what load our rifle shoots best (or creating our own) if we do most of our shooting inside 350 yards.

For those shooting factory ammo at longer distances, ES and SD have greater significance. Knowing this, G&A generally uses only Oehler 35P or MagnetoSpeed chronographs. We fire 10 rounds across the chronograph for each load to collect the ES and SD. We've selected these two chronographs for testing purposes because they're the most accurate when checked against Doppler radar. There are cheaper and/or easier-to-assemble chronographs available on the market, but the information they provide isn't as accurate. If ES and SD matter to you, use either the Oehler or the MagnetoSpeed to generate meaningful data.

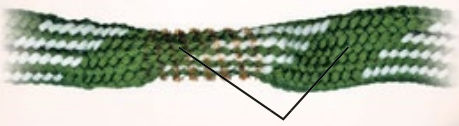
Three or Five? A sure way to start a fight with rifle shooters is to ask how many rounds should be fired for each group. Some say three, some argue for five, and yet others are adamant that we should all be shooting 10 rounds per group if we're serious about knowing our rifle's accuracy potential. Ten is ridiculous.

The truth is, the rifle decides how many rounds it should fire per group. Specifically, the barrel contour and chambering are what tell us how many rounds the rifle wants to fire.

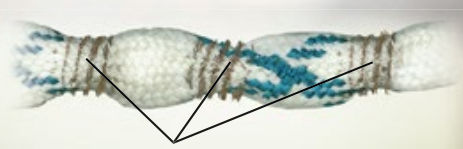
Hunting rifles with their light barrel contours should shoot three rounds per group. There just isn't much steel to mitigate the effects heat has on the barrel once we start

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World Champion Jessie Duff takes no prisoners. That's why she relies on BoreSnake Viper. The world's fastest bore cleaner is also the most powerful weapon against anything between you and your best shot.



Original BoreSnake features 2 brushes.



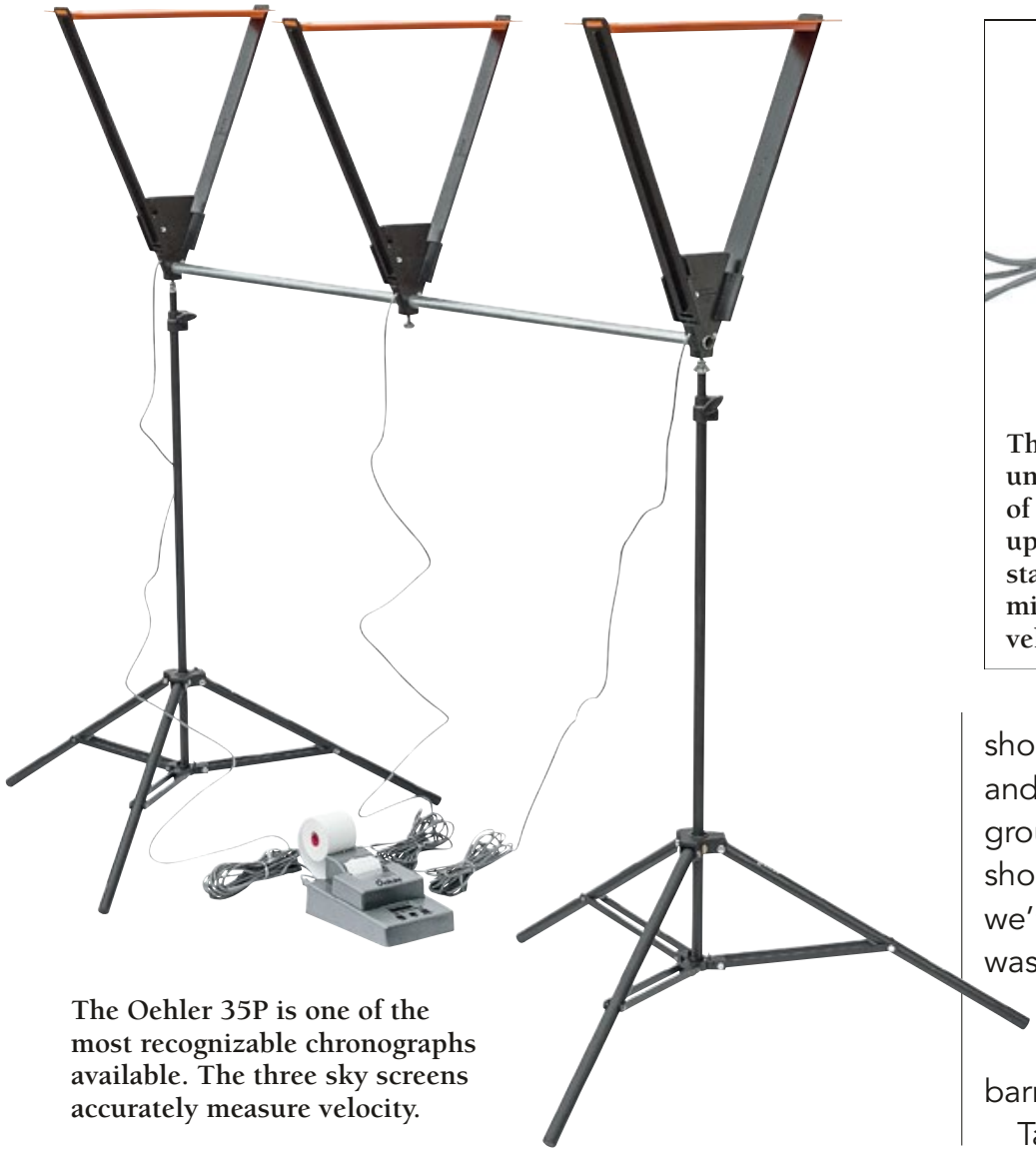
BoreSnake Viper has 3 brushes for 50% more cleaning power.



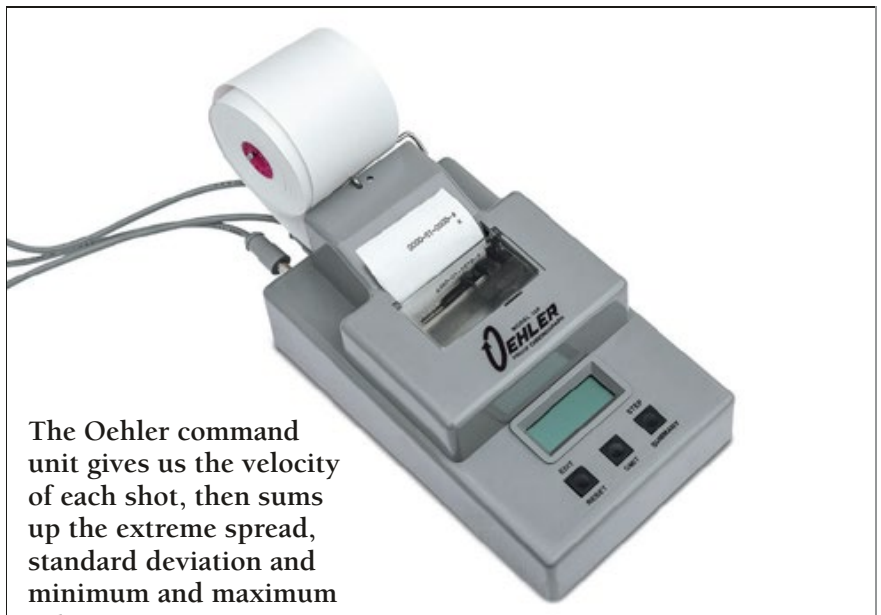
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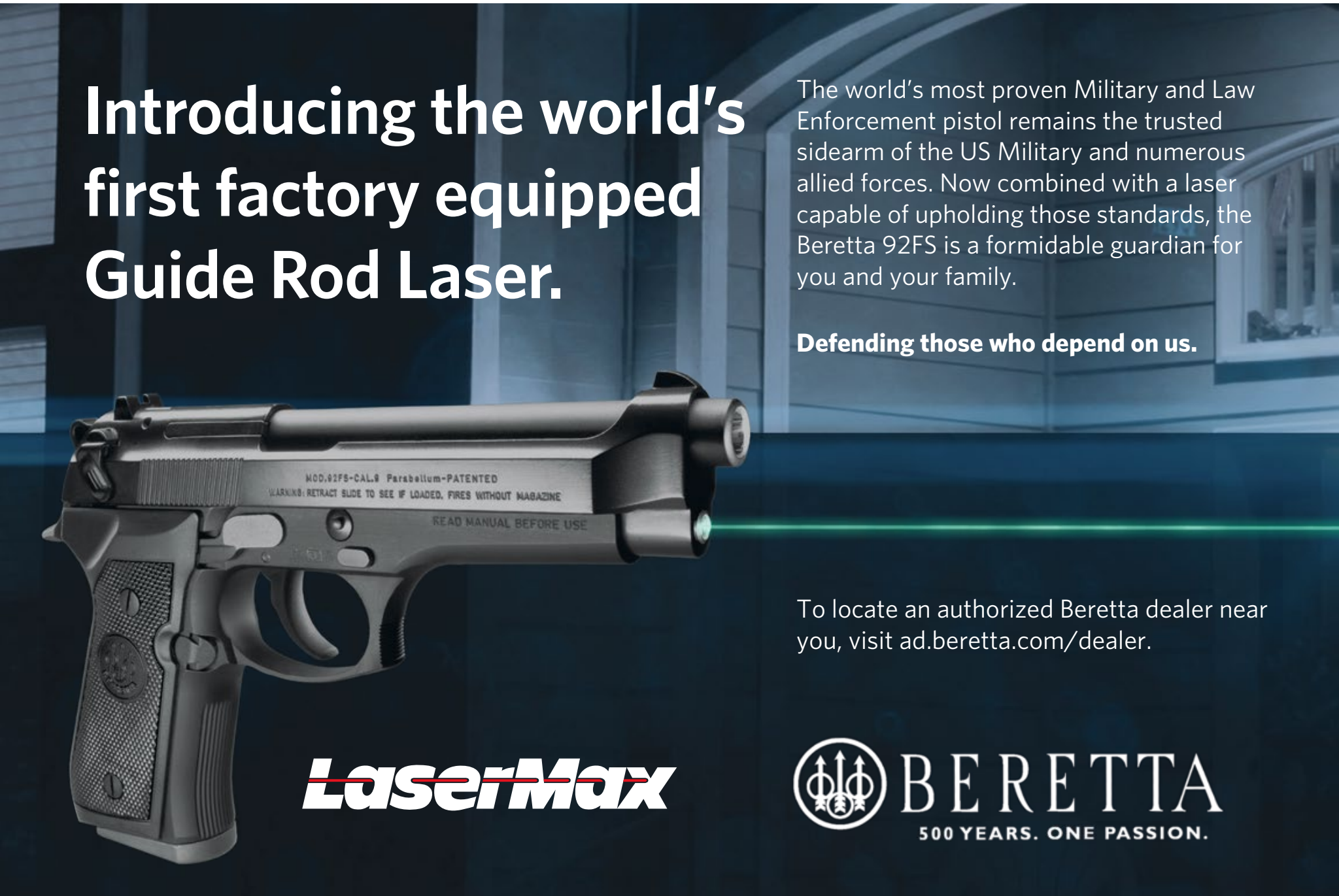
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shooting. Heat is the great destroyer of a barrel's accuracy, and skinny barrels heat quickly. Once a barrel heats up, group sizes increase, sometimes dramatically. If we insist on shooting five rounds per group out of a light hunting barrel, we're using that barrel for a purpose other than for what is was intended, so shame on us. Hunting barrels were never meant to keep the Mongolian horde at bay; they exist to give us one to three accurate shots at a time. Skinny barrels get tested with three-shot groups.

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The heavy contour up top just screams "five-shot groups, please!" The lighter profile on the hunting rifle is better suited to three-shot groups, especially if it's a magnum.

contours, so these should get five rounds per group. The heavier barrel is much better equipped to handle the effects of heat, which is why tactical and competitive rifles have heavy barrels in the first place. If terrorists swarm the neighborhood, grab the rifle with a heavy barrel. These rifles can handle the heat, so they get five rounds per group.

We should also consider the rifle's chambering when we're deciding how many rounds to shoot per group. The larger the case capacity, the more aggressively we'll have to manage heat. For example, a .223 Remington burns about 23 grains of powder per cartridge fired. This doesn't generate a lot of heat, so we can get away with shooting five-round groups out of a barrel with a traditional hunting contour. However, a 7mm Remington Magnum burns about 70 grains of powder per cartridge fired. That's a significant amount of heat for all but the heaviest of barrels. Getting consistent three-round groups out of a hunting contour with this cartridge will require patience and time to let the barrel cool.

The overriding principle with how many shots per group is to shoot as many as the barrel will consistently handle. We always want to use and test the rifle as the manufacturer intended. Hunting rifles can usually take three per group; varmint and tactical/competitive rifles can usually handle five.

Not every rifle we test is equally set up for success. Rifles that come with match-grade stainless barrels have an advantage because they are frequently lapped prior to leaving the factory. Barrels that had the chamber hammer-forged along with the bore also have an advantage much like the premium stainless models. In both cases, the bores are usually very smooth and lack any burrs or scratches from the factory chambering process.

If you want to give your rifle the best chance to do well for your own accuracy test (and it doesn't have a barrel like those described above), first put 100 rounds down the barrel with whatever ammo is the cheapest. This knocks the hemorrhoids out of the bore. Once it's had a good cleaning, let the testing begin. G&A




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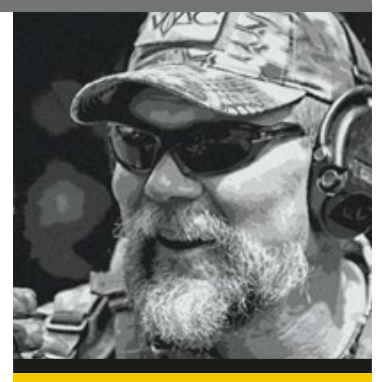
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*Proper **two-hand grip** shooting positions with the pistol.*



SGM KYLE LAMB [RET.]

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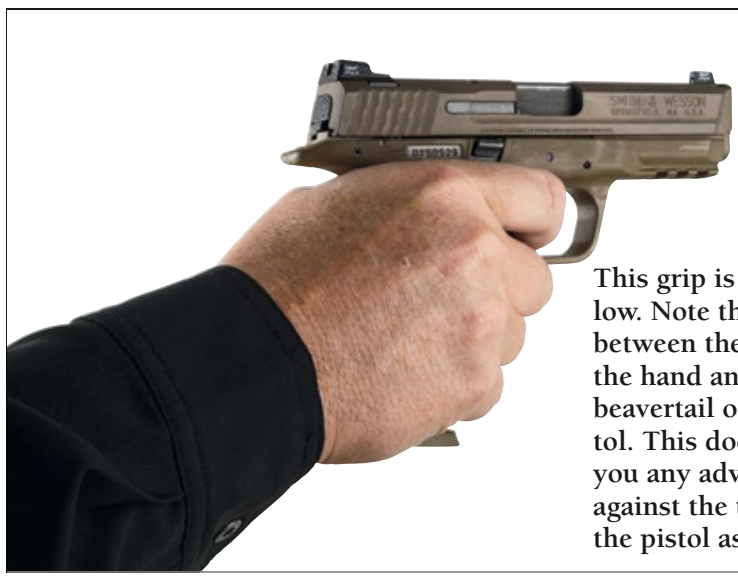
GET A (GOOD) GRIP

MOST OF US GREW UP shooting a rifle of some sort, whether it was your first Crosman 760 pellet rifle being used to wreak havoc on the local barn swallows, or, for you highfalutin guys, it may have been a Ruger 10/22 with 25-round banana magazines and all the trimmings. Most of the shooters I know had a pretty sound rifle repertoire, but their pistol skills were picked up later in life and may not be quite as refined.

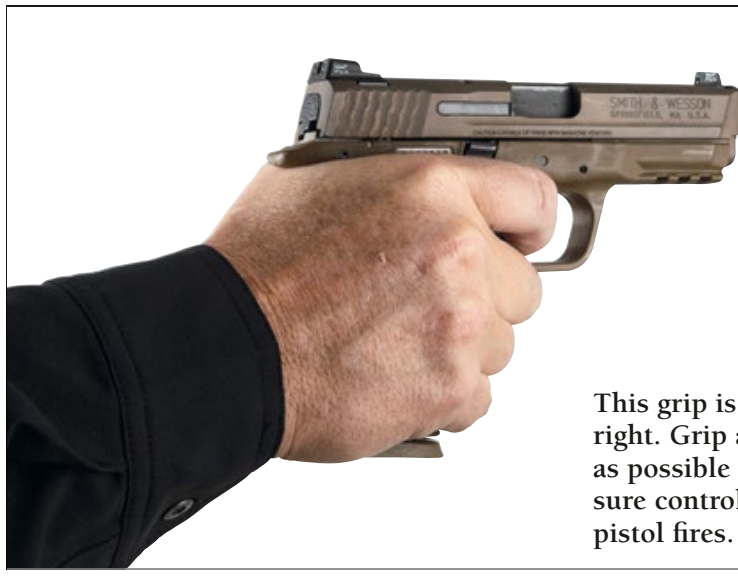
I know for a fact I had a jacked-up pistol grip when I finally made it to the dark side of Special Forces. I had cut my teeth on a Ruger MK II .22LR, and I also had a Ruger New Model Blackhawk in .357. When I joined the Army, I quickly acquired a 9mm Taurus, which made me an official gunslinger.

While trying to build my self-proclaimed skill set, I was fortunate enough to be transitioned into a Special Operations unit where I was shown the way. My first true pistol sensei was a fella everyone called "Ray Bob." He was a gunslinging son of a gun. The first thing he taught me was a better grip for handguns. I had worked years to perfect a very poor grip that worked well at the beginning of the firing sequence but degraded rapidly once I made the pistol go *bang*.

He didn't explain the specifics; he just told me I was holding onto my 1911 as though I were a Girl Scout and I needed to change a few things. He had me change from a "cup-and-saucer mixed with a front-of-the-triggerguard rest" to a more modern position. I resisted initially, but after a brief try, I quickly saw the benefits of the grip he'd demonstrated.



This grip is too low. Note the space between the top of the hand and the beavertail of the pistol. This doesn't give you any advantage against the torque of the pistol as you fire.



This grip is just right. Grip as high as possible to ensure control as the pistol fires.

Over the last 20 years, I've not only refined that pistol grip, I've had to learn to teach it to quickly get my students on the right track. There are some really bad examples of pistol shooting grips out there, and I'd like to discuss what truly works.

First and foremost is ensuring that your shooting hand is as high on the pistol as possible. This helps fight recoil, since the barrel and slide will be sitting as close to your hand as possible. Not all pistols are created equally when it comes to shootability.

I prefer a pistol with a very low bore axis, or, in other words, how the slide and barrel fit in relation to how high you are able to establish a grip on the pistol. I press the web of my hand as high as I can on the pistol's backstrap. Some pistols have a beavertail that will allow you to get even higher without causing the slide to bite the web of your hand. Slide bite is prevalent with many semiautomatic handguns, but after a while, you'll adapt your grip to work with this system.

The myth I hear most frequently is that you should grip the pistol equally with both the strong and support hand. If speed and accuracy are any indicators of the correct technique, then a 50/50 grip for the pistol is incorrect. The top shooters in the world use a 40/60 strong/support-hand ratio. I go even a step further when I teach combat pistol marksmanship and push shooters to attain a 30/70 strong/support-hand percentage. The point is that the support hand needs to grip tightly while

PHOTOS: LUKAS LAMB















Cam your nonfiring hand forward, but don't overdo it. This position creates a stopping point for the recoil sequence.

Top: The support hand is not touching the pistol as much as is needed. Above: This is a perfect support-hand position.

Top: Too much grip with the thumb of the support hand will throw your shots to the left and right. Above: Here, the thumb rests naturally on the frame, yet doesn't push the pistol left or right.

the firing hand relaxes slightly to allow for a controlled, smooth trigger squeeze. If you have additional tension in your firing hand and arm, you won't be able to move your trigger finger quickly and independently of the rest of your firing hand. Trigger control becomes jerky and taxing if you are not able to relax your firing hand.

Sticking with the mantra of the support or nonfiring hand doing all the work, next we need to add some recoil management. We can't entirely stop recoil with a good support-hand grip, but we can have a grip that allows us to drive the pistol quickly back onto the target and immediately be ready to shoot again. As I've often said, "Anything

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Get a high grip, and have a plan. Lamb tries to place as much of his support hand on the exposed grip as possible, using his strong-hand fingertips as a ledge to retain the pistol during firing.



Place as much of the meaty portion of your support hand on the pistol grip as possible.



The support hand is the most important hand when firing a pistol.

worth shooting once is worth shooting 17 times." Of course, we won't always shoot 17 times with every pistol presentation, but we should maintain a grip that allows for this to happen. We shouldn't just shoot it; we should hit repeatedly and quickly without having to think too much.

Since the support hand is planning to hold 60 to 70 percent of the pistol, we should make sure that we have as much of the support hand contacting the grip as possible. Even if you have hands the size of your local yard gnome, you can get a secure grip on the pistol with the support hand. Fill the space left open on the support side of the pistol with the meaty portion of your hand as best you can. It is also a good idea to use the tips of your firing-hand fingers as a ledge to grip against as you are shooting. Once



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the hand is in this position, a couple of key movements need to take place.

The first and most important part of your support-hand grip is that you cam your nonfiring hand forward to create a tightened position. Don't overcam; this position should not be painful. Cam forward with the wrist to create a stopping point for the recoil sequence. As you fire the pistol, you will still have felt recoil, but the support hand is there to push the pistol back onto target and stop it right where it started. This process is the sole responsibility of the forward-cammed support hand.

As you cam the support hand forward, you must clamp the firing hand with the support hand. Your grip should not be a twist but a clamping action. If you feel like you are peeling your firing-hand fingers from the pistol, you may be twisting the clamp rather than clamping directly from left to right or vice versa. Try to feel the clamping equally on both sides of your firing hand.

I also point my support thumb toward the target. This helps to cam the wrist and point at the target. If you must, let your thumb touch the slide or frame, but use minimal pressure. Too much force with the thumb can push rounds to the right for a right-handed shooter and in the opposite direction for a lefty.

If your hands come apart every time you shoot, there are a couple of tricks that will help. One is to wear shooting gloves that are thin enough to allow you to feel the pistol, the trigger and all of the necessary parts. Another trick is to use Pro-Grip. This goo works well, but it and shooting gloves should be used sparingly until you can proceed without shooting aids. If you are a military or law enforcement shooter, you may be able to use gloves. If this is the case, I would highly recommend shooting with them frequently to build your gripping technique. Manipulating safeties, magazine releases and slide stops is not as easy with gloves on. If you're a civilian practicing for concealed carry, gloves could become a crutch that may not be available when the turd hits the fan.

Many instructors want to tell their students exactly how much finger to put on the trigger. Shooters come in all shapes and sizes, so I say place as little or as much trigger finger as you need to get the job done. I use more trigger finger when shooting accurately and less when attempting to shoot fast. I feel the trigger better with more finger (accuracy) and can move the trigger finger faster with less finger (speed). Play with finger placement until you find what works for you. When I squeeze the trigger, I try to prevent my finger from rubbing on the frame of the pistol. This is unneeded friction and resistance that will only cause you to shoot poorly. G&A



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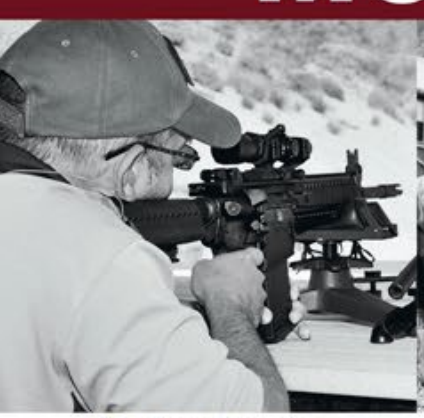
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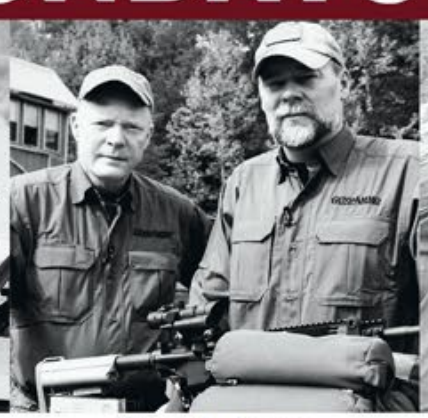
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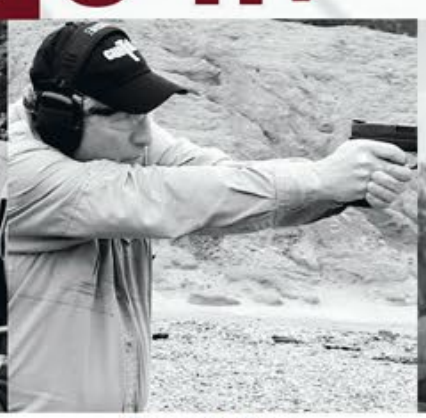
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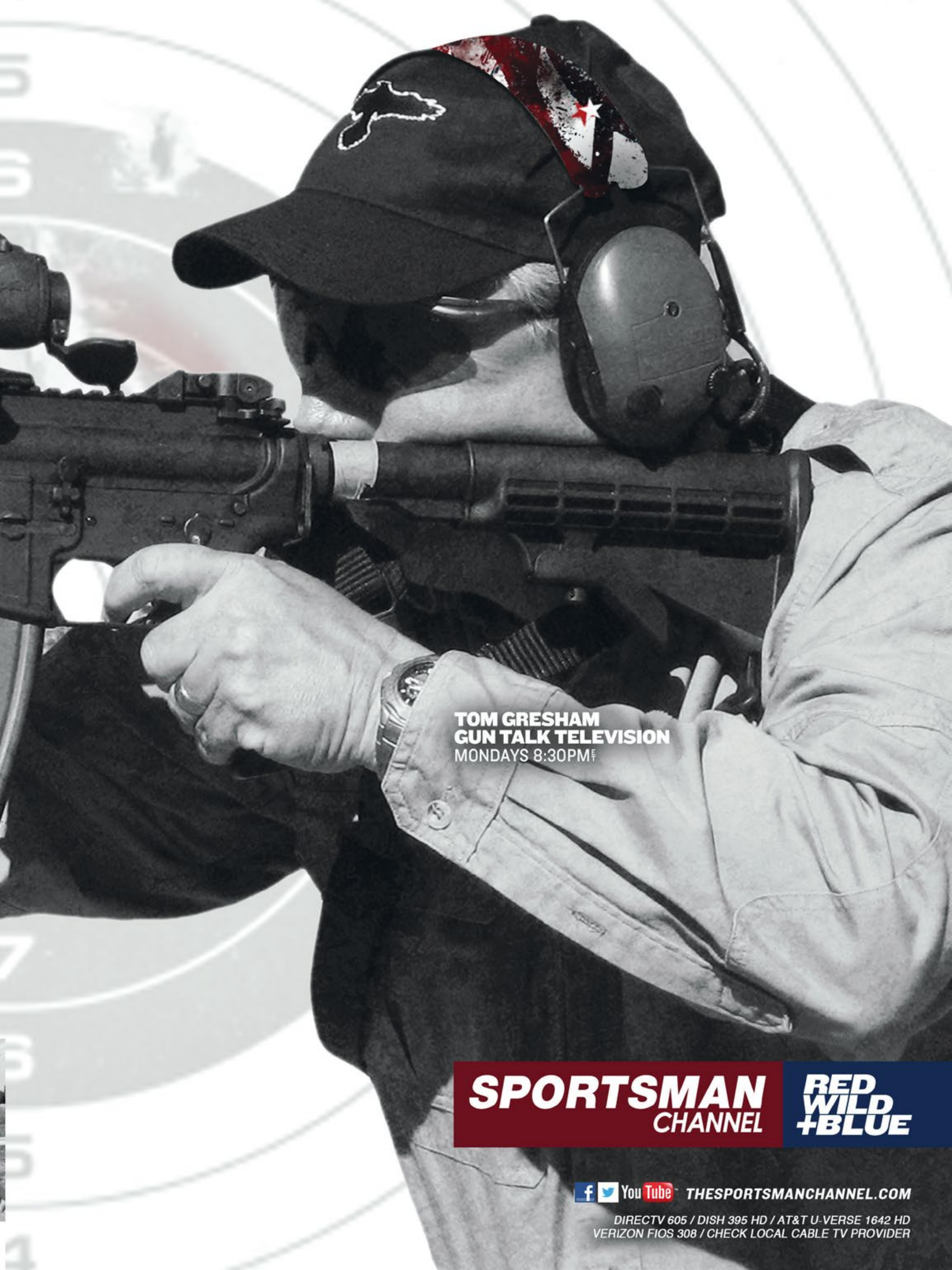
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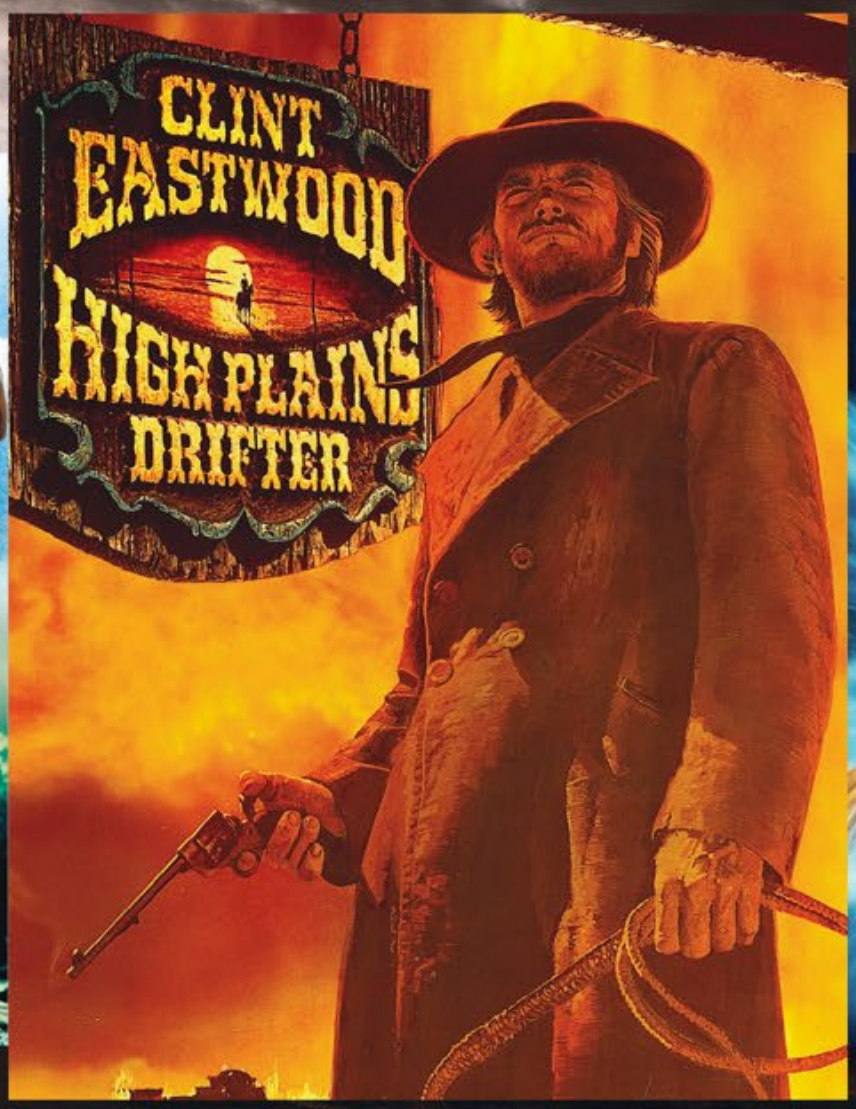


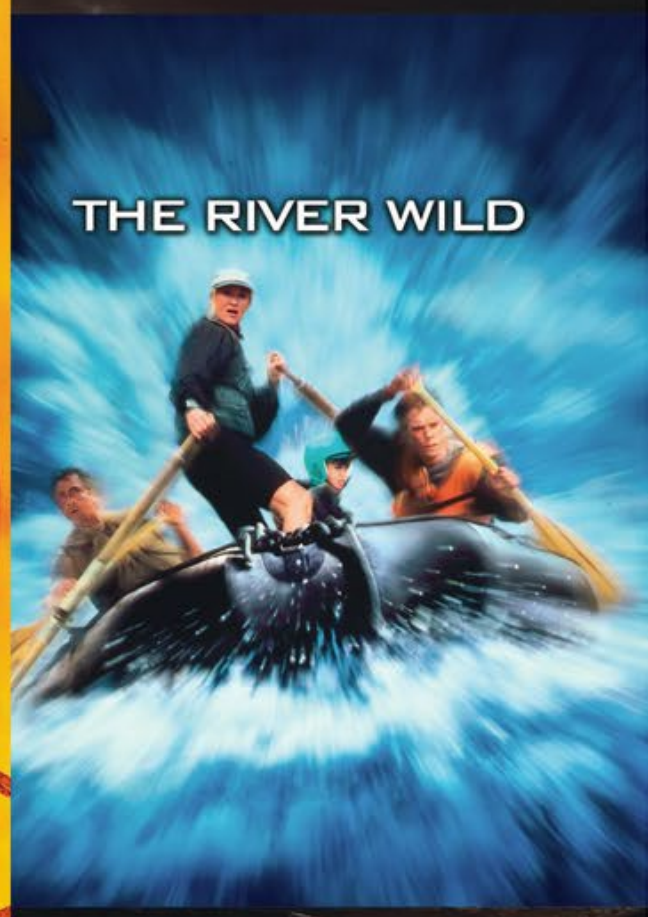
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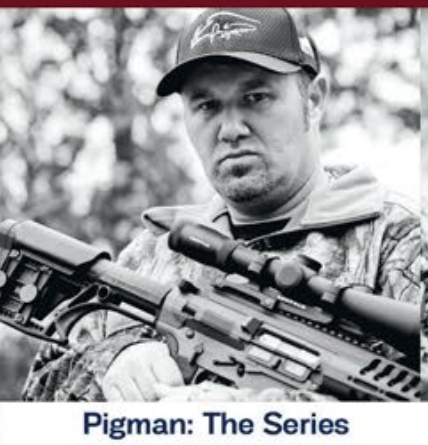
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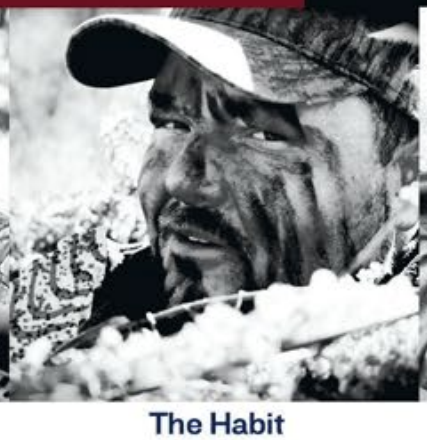
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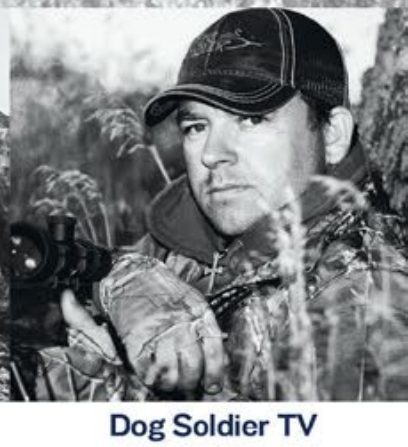
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LITTLE BIG BOY

Springfield Armory's new Mod.2 Sub-Compact is now in .45.

Words by Patrick Sweeney | Photos by Michael Anschuetz

Springfield Armory XD Mod.2 Sub-Compact	
Type:	Striker-fired, semiautomatic
Caliber:	.45 ACP
Capacity:	9+1 rds. (13+1 w/full-size magazine)
Barrel:	3.3 in.
Overall Length:	6.25 in.
Width	1.19 in.
Height	4.75 in.
Weight:	26 oz.
Finish:	Stainless steel (slide); polymer (frame)
Grips:	Molded, GripZone
Sights:	Fiber optic, red (front); two-dot, white (rear)
Trigger:	5 lbs. (tested)
Price:	$593 (black); $629 (Bi-Tone)
Manufacturer:	Springfield Armory 800-680-6866 springfield-armory.com

THERE IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE between capacity and comfort when it comes to concealed carry. We all want something easy to carry, but many of us want more protection than what the most comfortable handgun can provide, at least when it comes to caliber and capacity. That's where the high-cap shorties come in. You know, the double-stack pistols that have had the frame shortened to make them less likely to print through a shirt or jacket.

Every time I shoot one of the stubby compacts, I can't help but think of Joe Pesci in "Goodfellas." ("You think I'm funny? Do I *amuse* you?") I mean, just how *are* you supposed to hold on to these things? I think we've all established that I'm — in some aspects — not a 21st century guy. My cell phone is too primitive to know what an app is, and the frame of a single-stack pistol is the correct, comfortable and proper design. Except, those stubby compacts hold more bullets when the grip gets short. So it is with the latest Springfield Armory XD, the Mod.2 Sub-Compact. First introduced in 9mm and .40, here we have the next obvious step.

Starting with the previous version of the XD Sub-Compact, Springfield fussed over pretty much everything. To start, the Mod.2 has a 3.3-inch barrel in .45 ACP, which holds nine rounds in the stubby magazine. A supplied



All XD pistols are easy to fieldstrip and keep clean. A dual recoil spring tames felt recoil and guarantees reliablilty in these subcompact pistols.

full-size magazine carries 13.

The 9mm and .40 versions have 3-inch barrels, but the rest of the dimensions are unchanged with this new model. Springfield resculpted the slide to make it slimmer for ease of carry. Even while it was made slimmer, the shape of the cocking serrations were changed to give you more tactile grip at the back of the slide. The Posi-wedge grooves are cut into the slide at the bottom of the cocking serrations recessed panel. Not only do you have the grippy serrations, they are in a shallow pocket that increases the amount of gripping area your hand experiences.

On top of the slide, Springfield Armory added a fiber-optic front sight and a low-profile, no-snag extended rear sight wearing a pair of white dots on it. The bottom rear edge of the rear sight curves down to follow the curve of the slide to offer your eye a cleaner transition to the sight blade and less of a gap to catch your eye between slide and sight.

The frame has likewise been worked over. The first thing to notice is that it's slimmer. By carving away all the excess polymer (not that there was much there to begin with), Springfield made the grip thinner and easier to grasp. It also lifted the beavertail to get your hand higher on the frame and raised the frontstrap at the triggerguard to get that finger higher as well. Lifting the frontstrap is a feature that people often pay a custom gunsmith some coin to do to their 1911s. Springfield makes it a standard feature on the Mod.2 XD.

As one more aspect of the "making it slimmer" features list of the XD Mod.2 Sub-Compact, Springfield shaved the disassembly lever to make it less of an impediment in your holster.

The changes don't stop there (one wonders what is in the water in Geneseo). The company changed the texture of the gripping area of the frame. Called "GripZone," at first I thought it was a step too far. How do you improve a grippy, nonslip frame? Springfield looked at the frame as a surface you grasped not evenly or with the same parts of your hand. After all, if your fingers on the front are doing one thing and the heel of your hand another, should they have the same texture to perform different tasks?













Top left: The little XD boasts a big magazine capacity, with a flush-fitting, nine-round magazine or a 13-rounder with Springfield's X-tension.

Top right: The Mod.2 features a slimmer slide, increasing comfort and decreasing the pistol's profile.

Above left: A fiber optic front sight allows for red dot sight-like speed.

Above: Springfield Armory undercut the triggerguard on the Mod.2 line of pistols, allowing for a higher grip, which translates into less recoil and more control, especially during rapid-fire strings.

Left: Deeper slide serrations reduce the level of grip strength needed to pull the slide to the rear. A low-profile combat rear sight simplifies one-handed manipulations.

Right: The new GripZone texturing rivals any custom job, providing the correct amount of coarseness in all the right places. The slim, contoured frame ensures that the new Mod.2 fits most hand sizes.

Finally, after much testing and discussion, the GripZone was divided into three areas, Zones 1, 2 and 3. Zone 1 is a medium-aggressive nonslip texture to give you an anti-slip surface without making it feel like you're holding onto a squirming block of coarse sandpaper. You don't need the maximum nonslip everywhere. Zone 2 is the max-traction area, and Springfield made it as aggressive as it could without it rasping your hand. Where you need the maximum grip is where the Zone 2 texture is laid. Zone 3 is everywhere else, where a nonslip surface would be nice but your hand — sometimes in the draws, sometimes in transitions — might need to be able to slide a bit to adjust and accommodate.

The end result is a grip frame that grabs you where you need it to, doesn't feel like it's trying to shred your hand and lets go when you do. This is all good. I remember going through Gunsite back in the old days with various pistols that had too-sharp checkering and almost shedding a tear each night as I knocked the newly found sharp edges off the frame with a file. Here's a pistol you can practice hard with and not have your hand be a mass of bandages and tape at the end of the day.

What Springfield didn't change were the aspects of the XD that it had already perfected awhile back. The pistol still has the grip safety on the back of the frame, one that doesn't need an extra speed bump like many 1911s to make sure your hand properly engages it on the draw. The Mod.2 also has an accessory rail on the front of the frame to park a light, laser or combo unit. The



magazine catch is ambidextrous, so there is no need to swap it to one side or the other. The magazines are unchanged, so if you have a supply of XD mags in the correct caliber, they will work in the Mod.2.

The slide is still forged, stainless, heat-treated and Melonite-treated for the utmost in durability. It has the same USA (Ultra Safety Assurance) trigger that XDs have had all along to make it easy to use and still safe.

The end result for those looking for a daily-carry gun is that it is compact, yet easy to shoot. The barrel is under 3½ inches, and the slide is short to match. The grip is short to make it more comfortable to carry and easier to conceal, with the regular (that is, subcompact) magazine bringing the height up to 4¾ inches. Mine came in the now-usual Springfield Armory hardcase, complete with holster and magazine carrier, and when I shifted the paperwork around, I found a regular magazine as well as one with an extra sleeve on it at the bottom, called the X-tension.

The X-tension magazine is three-quarters of an inch longer, and the sleeve at the bottom matches the contour and texture of the GripZone. The extra tube length adds capacity, and the X-tension adds grip area. Hallelujah, brothers and sisters. The regular short magazine is so short that in recoil, my last finger slips off the frame, Zones notwithstanding. (This was true at least in the .45 ACP version. The recoil of the 9mm is soft enough that my finger would probably stay, but we all know what caliber I'd opt for and which one I tested.) The longer magazine adds enough length that my last finger stays with the team and keeps the gun from rising as much in recoil.

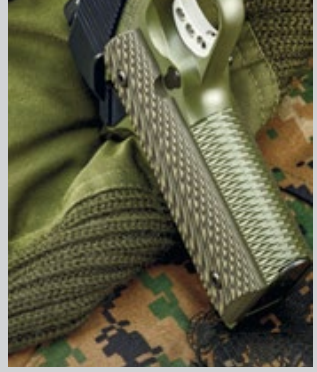
The capacity wars were settled a long time ago, and we now have a pretty good idea of how many rounds any size pistol will hold in any caliber, which makes the XD Mod.2 so surprising. In its compact size with the regular magazine, it holds 13 rounds of 9mm, nine of .40 and nine of .45 ACP. The regular magazine (extended, if you view the Sub-Compact size as the regular size) holds 16 rounds of 9mm, 12 of .40 and 13 of .45 ACP.

Wait, what did I say? It holds more rounds of .45 than it does of .40? How can this be? Simple: Double-stack magazines can be made either with flat sidewalls or dimpled, ridged sidewalls. The internal width needed is determined by the diameter of the case.



SPRINGFIELD ARMORY MC OPERATOR 1911

THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS is the last user of the 1911 pistol in the U.S. military. When the Marine Force Reconnaissance elected to stay with the 1911 platform in the 1980s, the challenge with that decision was that the majority of the M1911s in the armories were well worn with no new production to replace it. The solution was to rebuild existing guns into a more capable pistol. Until the M45A1 CQBP contract was awarded three years ago, Marines assigned to the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) carried built and/or rebuilt 1911s upgraded and tuned by armorers from Quantico's legendary Precision Weapons Section (PWS). Many components used in the old M45s (such as slides) were supplied by Springfield Armory.



The Marine Corps System Command purchased 150 1911s from Springfield Armory in 2006. Shortly after, Springfield introduced the MC Operator, a commercial variant of the Marines' pistol with a green, Armory Kote-finished frame, Novak/Trijicon sights, match barrel, Pachmayr wrap-around grips and integral accessory rail.

For 2015, Springfield Armory has updated this model with two subtle changes. The grips have been replaced with diagonal-serrated G-10 grips, and a confidence-inspiring texture has been added to the frontstrap.

See more at springfieldarmory.com MSRP $1,300

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The exterior is determined by the frame size and the starting width of the tube you use as the magazine. It just so happens that the proportions work out in favor of the .45 this time instead of the usual .40.

All I can say is, I'm glad to have this in .45, and even if the numbers were reversed, giving the .40 the usual boost, I'd opt for .45. It's nice when things work to your advantage.

With its weight of 26 ounces empty, you'd expect the XD Mod.2 to be pretty stout in recoil with .45 ACP ammo. The recoil is noticeable but not in the way you'd expect. The width of the frame, the GripZone, distributes felt recoil evenly and widely in your hand, so the smack isn't that bad. What you notice is muzzle rise. The front sight rises up quickly and quite a ways, but it snaps back down just as fast. Even the hottest loads were not that sharp in recoil, just coming up a bit more than the average ones did.

I was a bit surprised, pleasantly so, by the velocities I found in the chrono testing. You'd expect a barrel that short (3.3 inches here) to be spitting out bullets at slow speeds, especially in the dead of winter. The ammo companies have been doing their part, and Springfield sure doesn't make slow barrels, because the stubby tube on the Mod.2 Sub-Compact gave faster-than-expected velocities for the loads tested.



G&A staff has found that the XD Mod.2 Sub-Compact will fit existing holsters designed for the XD^{M} and new carry options designed for the XD^{S}, such as these from Sneaky Pete Holsters.

One aspect of a compact, or subcompact, pistol that a lot of shooters don't pay enough attention to is accuracy. It's not that the pistol can't be accurate; it can. Locked into a machine rest, any of them is more accurate than 99 percent of the shooters shooting them. If you expect to get as much practical accuracy out of a subcompact as you do from your full-size pistol — XD or other — then, boy, do I have a bridge to sell you. You see, it just isn't possible. The sight radius is the main culprit here, with the sights 2 inches closer together on the subcompact — Mod.2 or other — than they would be on a full-size XD.



This may not seem like much, but the difference in sight radius is significant. The .45 subcompact has a radius that is about three-quarters as long as it is on the full-size XD. The 9mm and .40 have an even greater difference — just under three-quarters of that of the full-size gun. That is a big difference, and while you can overcome it with practice, it will still be an obstacle.

That said, the groups I shot with the XD Mod.2 Sub-Compact were very good indeed. My personal benchmark with a carry gun is whether I can shoot groups that appear on the target to be smaller in diameter than the apparent width of the front sight. With the Mod.2, this was no problem. I had a chance to try some new ammo from Polycase, and it shot very well for being out-of-the-box ammo. The bullets weigh 114 grains and are soft to shoot.

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	WEIGHT (GRS.)	VELOCITY (FPS)	SD	ACCURACY (IN.)
ASYM Barnes TAC-XP	185	881	12	2.50
HPR JHP	185	855	28	2.25
Hornady Critical Duty	220	927	13	2.75
Federal Guard Dog EFMJ	165	998	19	2.75
Polycase ARX	114	1,130	44	2.75

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 20 yards off a Sinclair front shooting rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots measured on a PACT MKIV chronograph set 15 feet from the muzzle.

With the Mod.2 as a carry gun, Springfield Armory has done the seemingly impossible. It has made its already-compact, easy-to-carry XD even more compact, slimmer and easier to shoot, and it hasn't given up anything for it. The remaining question is what magazine to carry in it.

The glib answer would be to carry it holstered with the short magazine and have the extra X-tension-equipped magazine as the spare. What I've found through years of carry is that the slide and barrel are the hardest part to live with, not necessarily to conceal but to be comfortable with. A too-long slide or barrel levers off of my hip, and the top end of the pistol slide or hammer digs into my kidney. I can use a holster that tucks the grips in tight to my body, but I can't change the results of years of weightlifting and martial arts.

For me, the Mod.2 Sub-Compact carry combo would be simple. I'd get another regular-length magazine, maybe not even bother with an X-tension (I'd practice and see if it made any difference in reload times) and pack the Mod.2 with both. I'd carry the pistol with the X-tension magazine in it and have the spare on the other side. That would give me 13+1 in the pistol and another 13 in the spare. That's 27 rounds of .45 ACP, which is more than a loaded 1911 and two spares would have.

One of these days, my checkbook is going to burst into flames, and Springfield will be the reason why. The XD Mod.2 Sub-Compact? It will be a big seller until the guys at Springfield just can't help themselves and find ways to enhance it even more.




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The Guns & Ammo Signature 1911

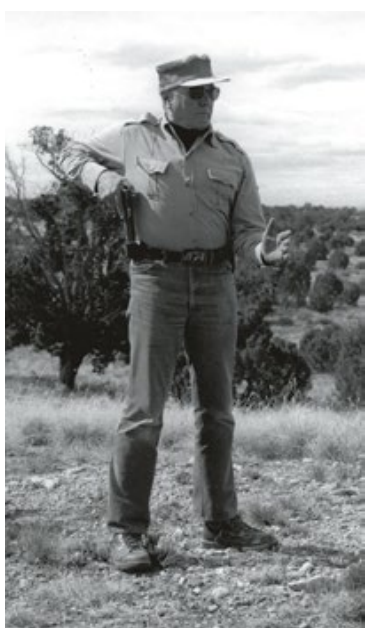
A Limited Edition tribute from Nighthawk Custom.

WORDS BY RICHARD MANN | PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ



WHEN I WAS 13, I had a paper route. Its only purpose was to make money for purchasing guns and ammunition. I'd ride my bike to deliver the daily news and every weekend down to Ray's Bait Shop, the local gun emporium. That's where my imagination wandered between issues of Guns & Ammo magazine. I read each one cover to cover, stuffed them under my bed and read them some more. I wanted to handle, shoot and hunt with all the guns contained in those pages and figured the best way was to write for the magazine — grand aspirations for a young boy for sure. Though I didn't know it then, about 15 years later and roughly 100 miles from where I grew up, another boy had similar ambitions.







Years later, in 2005, Eric Poole and I met, and a few years after that, during an African safari, we compared childhood dreams, vowed one day to make them a reality and discussed how we'd return the magazine to the grandness we'd consumed as youngsters. Less than a year later, Eric became the editor of Guns & Ammo and made me a part of the team. Our dreams realized, the work began.

Eric soon suggested that there should be a Guns & Ammo signature pistol. We agreed that it had to be a 1911 and Nighthawk Custom should build it. I insisted that it be a 1911 that Col. Jeff Cooper would have carried. After all, for most of the existence of Guns & Ammo, his undying support of the 1911 was the cornerstone of the magazine. Cooper once wrote, "People who write about the 'comeback of the 1911' do not seem to be aware that it has never been away."

I began dissecting Cooper's works and talking with his acquaintances to formulate the G&A pistol's configuration. The best sources were Sheriff Ken B. Campbell of Boone County, Illinois, and Gunsite Academy proprietor Buz Mills. "Keep it simple" was their guidance. Like Cooper once said, "The great 1911 .45 was a very nearly perfect artifact from the day of its birth, and this may be unique in the entire history of technology." As important as building a pistol Cooper would've carried was balancing Cooper's notions with the modern 1911 and what some call "Gun Culture 2.0." Today's 1911 user expects things Cooper would not have. I think he'd understand. After all, he also wrote, "How nice it is that people's tastes are so varied! If this were not true, all men would be doomed to pursue the same woman."

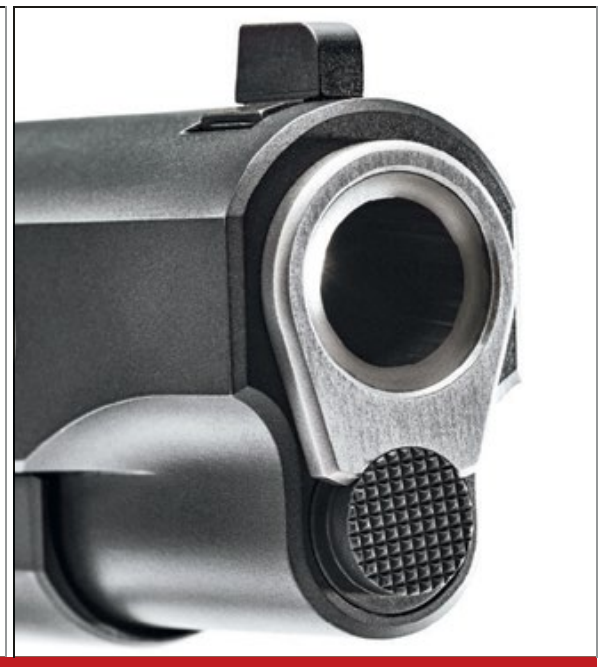
Cooper mostly wrote about the 5-inch Government Model 1911, but in his later years he carried a Lightweight Commander. With the spiked interest in concealed carry, the Commander profile was the obvious choice for this project. After all, Cooper thought, "The essential element of a defensive handgun (apart from reliability) is convenient portability." For shooter comfort and pistol longevity, it was also decided that a steel-frame Commander would be best and a much better choice for a 1,000-round course at Cooper's Gunsite Academy.

The remaining parameters could be found in one of Cooper's



G&A's Signature 1911 is simply a display of Commander-size brilliance, with every line and curve executed to perfection.





The Nighthawk Custom Guns & Ammo Signature 1911 is fitted with a single side safety only and a smooth mainspring housing.



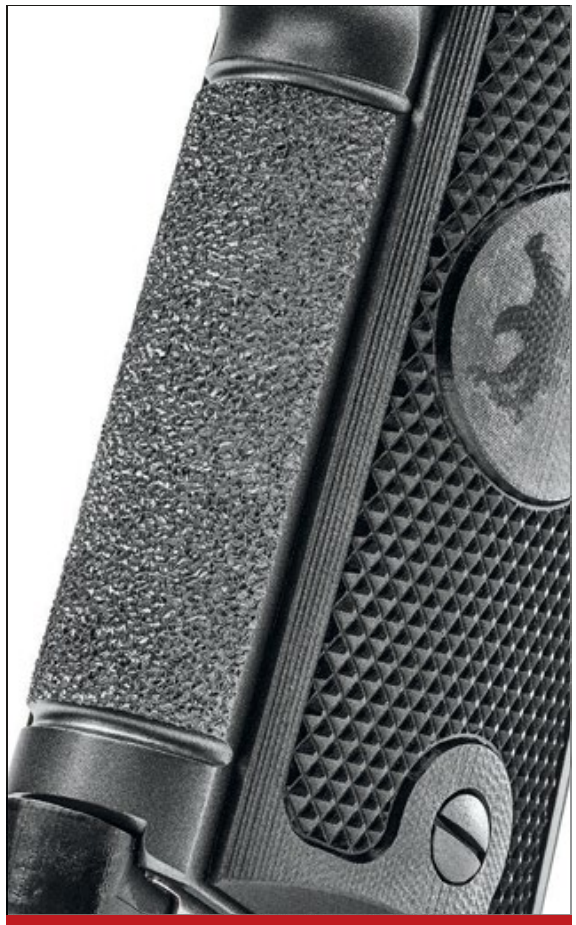


most quoted passages: " … we have opined that all the 1911 really needs are a trigger that you can manage, sights that you can see and a dehorn job. In addition, one might propose a deactivated grip safety[!], a lanyard loop, a bobbed hammer and press-fitted stock screw sockets. One thing the original pistol does not need is a recoil-spring guide … ."

It was also determined that the pistol must be able to be completely disassembled without the use of tools. This meant that the barrel bushing had to be fitted so it could be removed by hand, and the grip screws had to be slotted so they could be removed with the edge of the sear spring. There would be no senseless forward cocking serrations, because your hand has no business being that close to the muzzle of a loaded pistol. In the interest of no sharp edges and useless embellishments, there would be no checkering or top and rear slide serrations.

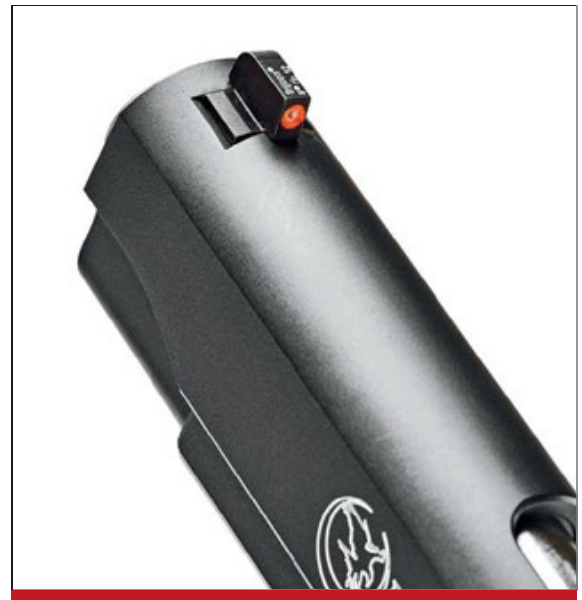
We went with a short trigger because all of Cooper's 1911s Eric and I have handled had one, and a short trigger is agreeable with a wide range of shooters. Continuing the notion of shooter and carry compatibility, a smooth, flat mainspring housing was used to eliminate palm bite and prevent the chewing up of covering garments. The grip safety was left alone for obvious reasons, but Nighthawk tastefully machined a lanyard loop into the bottom of the mainspring housing.

Some of the most debated elements of any fighting pistol are the sights. The Commander carried by Cooper during his later years was fitted with tritium sights featuring a large visible dot up front. We wanted something just as pronounced but with a more conventional sight picture, so we selected the high-profile Trijicon HD sights, which have a wide, .145-inch front blade and a rear sight with a deep, wide (.170 inch) U-notch. The front sight also has a tritium insert surrounded by a large and (appropriate) Guns & Ammo orange circle. This rear sight is robust with a horizontal-



In place of checkering, Nighthawk Custom stippled the frontstrap to enhance comfort and control.





The Trijicon HD front sight has a tritium insert surrounded by brilliant orange.



The rear sight has two minuscule tritium dots for low-light sight alignment. More important, it has a wide notch to allow you to see the front sight fast.

Nighthawk Guns & Ammo Signature 1911

Type:	Recoil operated, single action, hammer fired, semiautomatic
Caliber:	.45 Auto
Capacity:	8+1 rds.
Barrel:	4.25 in.
Overall Length:	7.75 in.
Weight:	2 lbs., 4 oz.
Finish:	Cerakote, Sniper Gray
Grips:	Alumagrips, Nighthawk
Sights:	Trijicon HD, orange
Trigger:	Short, 4 lbs. (tested)
Price:	$3,495
Manufacturer:	Nighthawk Custom 877-268-4867 nighthawkcustom.com

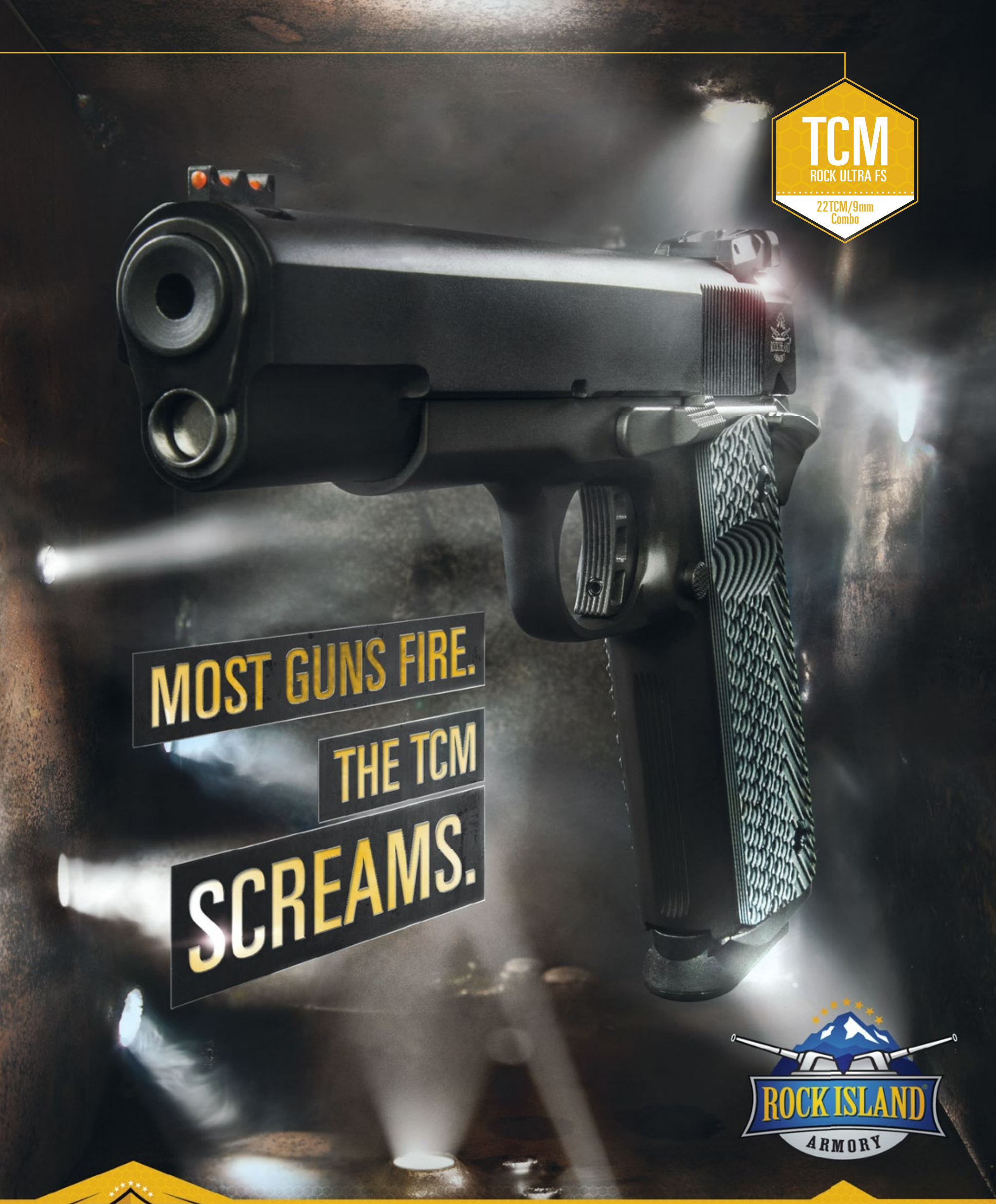
ly lined, flat-black face and two miniscule green-tritium inserts.

Serious Cooper disciples will likely reel with contempt at these three-dot sights. But one thing's for sure: If you cannot see these sights, you're probably approaching legal blindness. These represent the 21st century approach to handgun sights, and those who'd argue that Cooper would not have used them cannot argue that they are not consistent with his advice. They are, without question, "sights that you can see."

They proved their efficiency on the range. During several drills, such as the Cooper-conceived El Presidente, Eric and I turned in some of our best times and scores with this pistol equipped with Trijicon HD sights. That big, bold, orange front sight certainly draws your eyes; you don't have to look for it. Additionally, the pronounced ledge on the rear sight makes one-handed cycling simple with the aid of your belt or boot.

Looking at the Colonel's 1911s, it was apparent that his idea of visual enhancements was limited to the installation of fancier-than-factory grips. We went with Nighthawk's black Alumagrips with the Nighthawk logo over a moon knowing that many of us would personalize this feature as Cooper often did. These contrast nicely with the Sniper Gray Cerakote finish and exposed stainless engraving on the rest of the pistol. Other than the extensive beveling of every sharp edge, the only other metalwork considered was the stippling of the frontstrap. Nighthawk expertly obliged; this new stippling pattern Nighthawk has developed feels like textured rubber, and it does a good job of increasing the purchase your hand can get on the pistol.

Guns & Ammo's Signature pistol shoots like we'd expect of one custom made with 100 percent machined parts. I pushed 500 rounds through it using a wide variety of munitions, ranging from 165-grain Federal Guard Dog to 255-grain DoubleTap Hardcast loads. The pistol ate it all without a bobble. It also put



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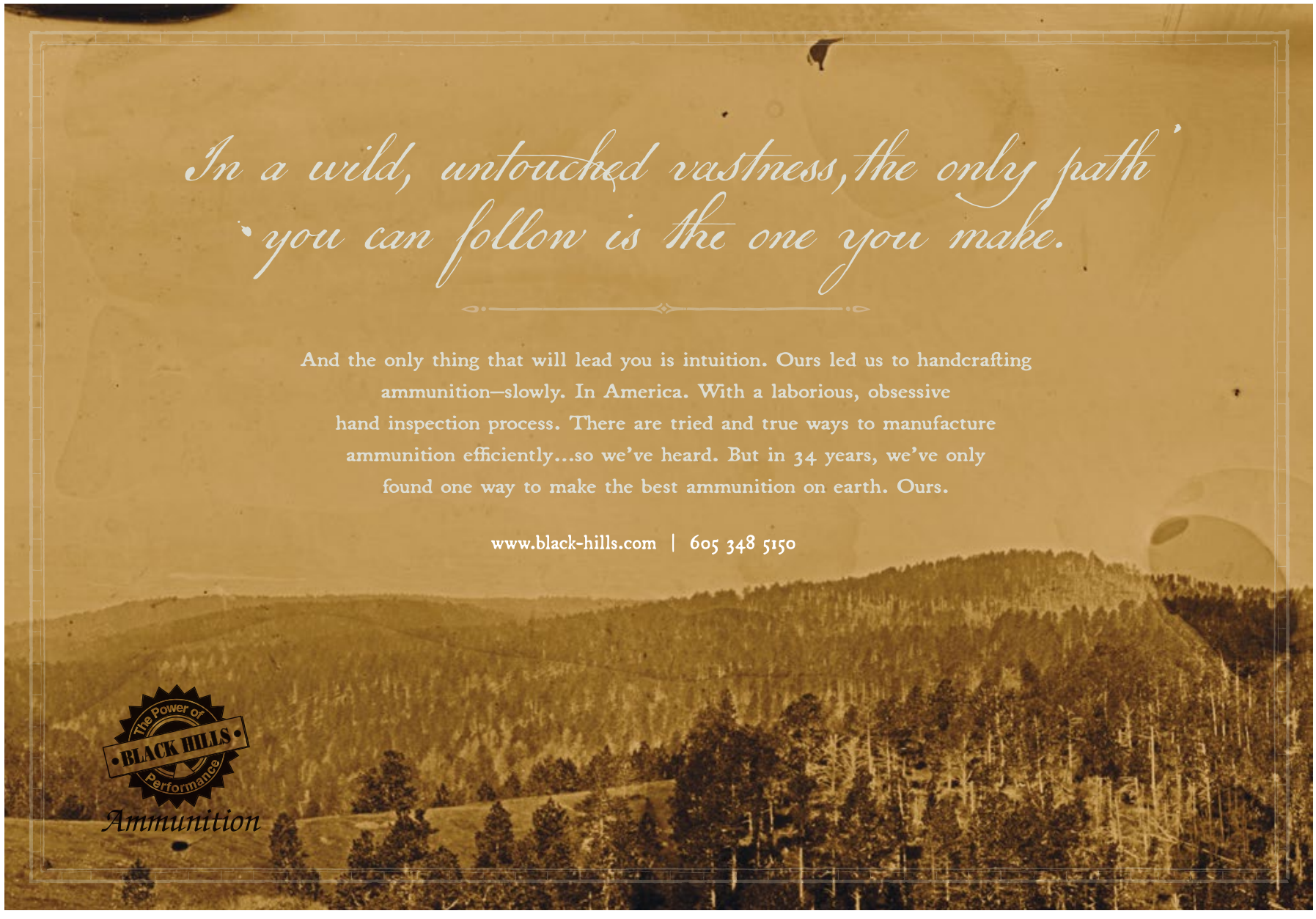
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GUNSAMERICA.COM TO AUCTION SERIAL # GA00001

STARTING MARCH 30TH and ending April 20, 2015, through the generosity of Nighthawk Custom, GunsAmerica.com will be auctioning the very same pistol featured in this article, serial number GA00001, for Honored American Veterans Afield (HAVA). All the proceeds derived from the sale of this pistol will go to supporting this organization, which comprises shooting industry companies and volunteers who are devoted to help the healing and reintegration of disabled veterans and injured active duty military. This mission is accomplished through sanctioned activities to include range days and hunts designed to accommodate a veteran's specific disability. Learn more about how you can support HAVA. Visit honoredveterans.org. To place a bid, go to: gunsamerica.com/blog/nighthawk-1911-hava-auction/









PERFORMANCE

LOAD	WEIGHT (GRS.)	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	AVERAGE GROUP (IN.)	BEST GROUP (IN.)
Federal Guard Dog	165	1,048	42	18	2.35	2.20
Remington UMC MC	185	954	22	9	1.60	1.57
Winchester PDX1	230	874	42	16	1.19	1.15
DoubleTap SWC Hardcast	255	759	59	23	1.64	1.43

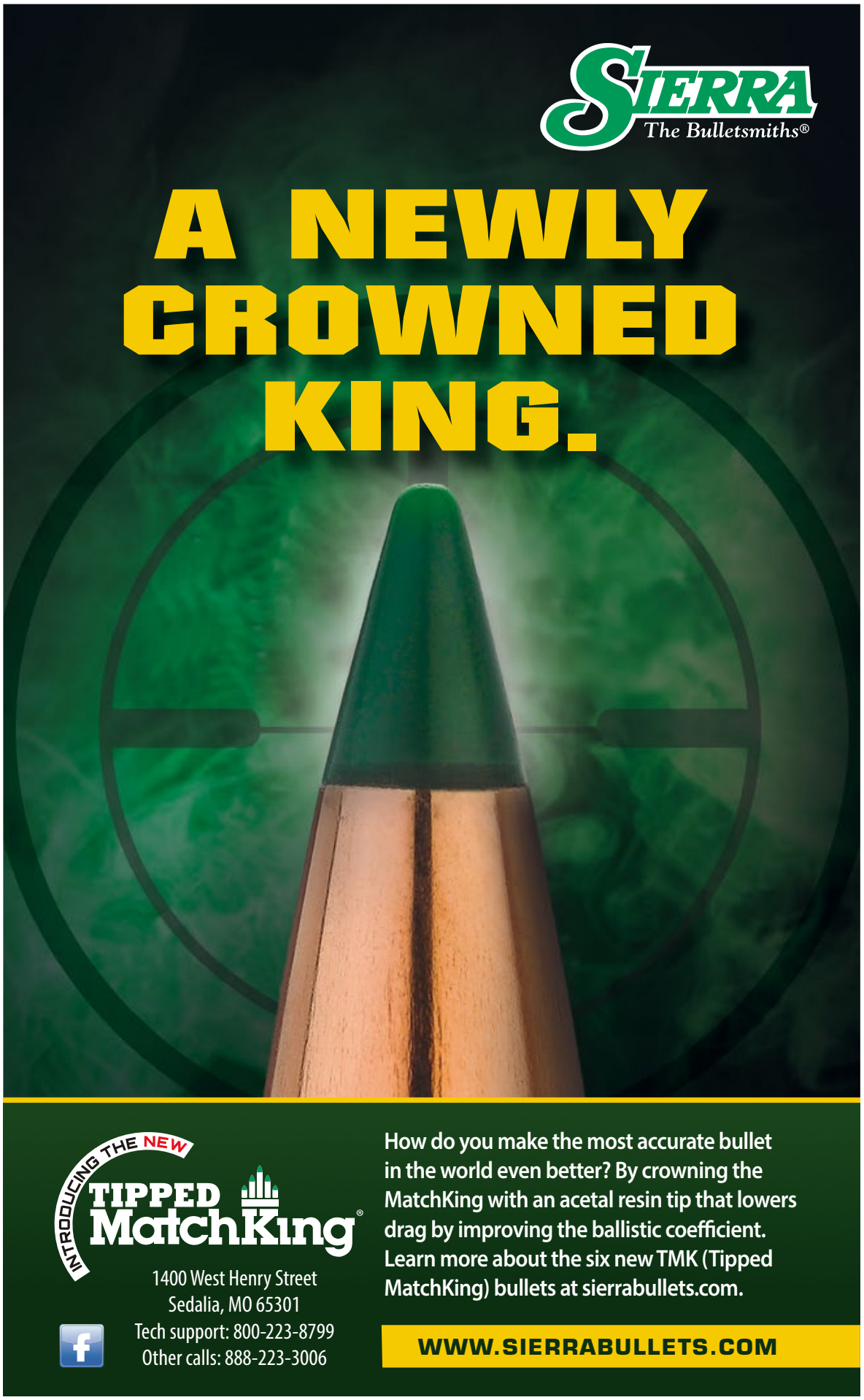
Notes: Average velocity, extreme spread (ES) and standard deviation (SD) were established by firing 10 rounds over a Shooting Chrony positioned 10 feet from the muzzle. Reported accuracy is the result of five five-shot groups fired from a sandbag rest at 25 yards with each load.

them all to point of aim at 10 yards while standing and into itty-bitty groups. The slide functioned with the smoothness of a wonderful singing voice, the trigger broke like a teenage girl's heart, and in the hand, the pistol felt like clasping the hand of your best friend.

I've written before that the perfect 1911 does not exist. This is not because a 1911 cannot be made to perform to perfection; Nighthawk Custom proves that's possible every day. It's because the 1911 is such an iconic and customized handgun that everyone has a notion of a slight or major alteration needed to make the pistol perfect. They can have it, too, which is one reason the 1911 was, is and will remain the foremost fighting pistol.

However, no one knew the 1911 like Jeff Cooper, and one built to his specifications should be, by any account, perfect. Is the Nighthawk Guns & Ammo Signature 1911 the perfect 1911? It's as close to perfect as we've seen. Would Cooper have carried it? No one knows; Cooper never had the chance to see one like this, as he passed away in 2006. As Cooper admirers, Gunsite graduates and, maybe more important, affiliates of the modern gun culture, Eric and I would both carry it. We *will* carry it.

As indicated by markings under the slide, Nighthawk is only offering 100 of these pistols through its more than 400 preferred dealers. It will be donating 5 percent of the sale price to Honored American Veterans Afield (HAVA.) Every Guns & Ammo Signature Nighthawk will be delivered with a serialized Letter of Authenticity signed by Nighthawk Custom CEO Mark Stone and Guns & Ammo Editor Eric R. Poole. It's destined to be collectible and has already proven to be a tackdriving work of art.



Now offered in five cartridges ranging from the new .26 Nosler to .300 Win. Mag., the 550 Sonoran in .270 is fit for hunting most of America's Lower 48 game animals.

WORDS BY PHILIP MASSARO | PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

CZ 550 SONORAN





The CZ 550 Sonoran in .270 Winchester makes for a fine all-around medium- and big-game rifle. Its appointments make it well suited for hunting almost any American game.



CZ 550 Sonoran	
Type:	Bolt action
Caliber:	.270 Win. (tested)
Capacity:	5 rds.
Barrel:	24 in.
Overall Length:	44.8 in.
Weight:	7.6 lbs.
Stock:	Manners carbon fiber
Finish:	Black nitride
Trigger:	Single set (1 lb., 10 oz.); Standard (3 lbs., 1.2 oz.)
Sights:	None
Safety:	Two position
MSRP:	$3,199
Manufacturer:	CZ-USA, 800-955-4486 cz-usa.com

Top: The palm swell of the Manners pistol grip makes for a nice, natural control.

Center: The flexible recoil pad made benchrest work a pleasure.

Bottom: With modern bullets, a .270 Winchester is much more well rounded and potent than ever.





WE HUNTERS who live to enter the backcountry, those of us who hunt the wildest places on earth, are often looking for a rifle that will live up to the lessons of our past experience. A field rifle needs to be as rugged as the hunters who carry it, accurate so as to ensure a quick and ethical kill on the game animals we respect so much, impervious to inclement weather and able to be relied upon. The CZ 550 Western Series fits all of these requirements.

When one first looks at this rifle, the design of the stock immediately stands out. CZ has elected to use a Manners carbon fiber stock in olive drab color for this lineup. Traditionalists may cock an eyebrow and question the lines, but upon handling it, it becomes evident that Manners knows what it's doing.

The pistol grip is a bit more vertical than a conventional rifle stock, but the palm swells offer a very comfortable feel. The grip angle is reminiscent of the Savage F-class rifle stock, and I noted that it has been fitted with a good-quality recoil pad that sits comfortably on the shoulder. The pistol grip and forend grip area have a pebbled, or distressed, texture, which isn't aggressive but does well to help us keep a firm grasp regardless of field conditions.

With certain models I've handled in the past, the 550 action has been a bit on the sticky side out of the box. Not so with the Sonoran I just finished evaluating. From the initial insertion of the bolt into the receiver, cycling the action feels smooth as glass, and cartridges feed very well from the five-round magazine, making follow-up shots no issue at all.

My test rifle came chambered for the venerable .270 Win-







Top: The proven controlled-round feed of the CZ 550 action makes for positive feeding and ejection of cartridges.

Bottom: The hinged floorplate is a great feature for safely unloading at the end of the day.

chester, a tried-and-true favorite that has been with us since 1925. Being the little brother of the king-of-the-hill .30-'06, the .270 has been criticized throughout history for not having a wide-enough range of bullets to make it a true all-around rifle. Bullet weights for this caliber generally run from 90 to 150 grains, with some specialty bullets made in 160 and 170 grains. The bullet technology of today has changed all that.

Whereas in the past folks such as the great Elmer Keith designated the .270 as a marginal rifle for game in the elk/moose/kudu weight range, the bonded-core and monometal bullets that are offered in .277-inch diameter may very well have changed that opinion. With a rifle such as the 550 Sonoran that gives a practiced hunter the ability to accurately place the bullet into the vitals of his quarry, a hunter should be able to successfully take most of the world's game animals that a medium-bore rifle would be suitable for. Bison, Cape buffalo and brown bears sensibly require a larger bore and heavier bullets, but if this were the rifle in hand on an African plains-game hunt, confidence would abound. Perhaps opting for the premium 150-grain bullets would help to hedge your bets when license and trophy fees add up to half a year's mortgage payments. In this era of giant-case super-mag-

Conceived for Men, but Women Love it Too!



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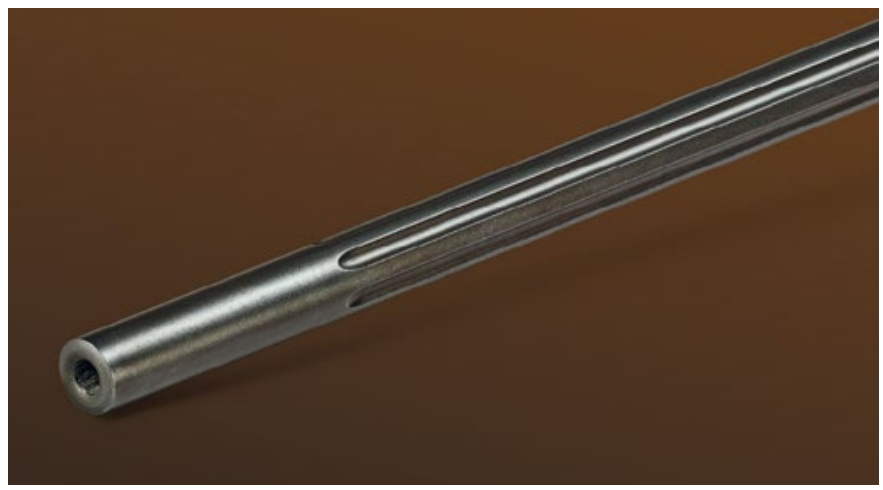
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Top: The CZ 550 barrel is completely free floated, which enhances accuracy.

Bottom: The fluted barrel hastens the cooling process while developing loads and practicing with your rifle.

nums, many of the sweet-shooting cartridges such as the .270 Winchester are too often overlooked. If you were to study your history, you'd find that there was a fellow named Jack O'Connor who made a bit of a reputation using this cartridge.

This particular rifle has a 24-inch fluted barrel, and it and all the metal are treated with a ferritic nitrocarburized finish inside and out. While that may sound really cool, it is designed to be tough. That doesn't mean we ignore CZ's recommendation to apply a light coat of quality gun oil on occassion. Do that and this finish should offer a lifetime of protection.

The 24-inch barrel length is an intelligent choice for this caliber, as it will give the shooter enough barrel length to wring out the velocity needed to get the flat trajectory that put the .270 on the map, yet not be unwieldy in field situations. The barrel is free floated in the carbon fiber stock without having a considerably large gap.

One of CZ's signature features has always been its single-set trigger. Oh, how a trigger can make or break a long-range shot. Many feel that CZ has a gem in that single-set design. Simply slip your finger behind the trigger, push forward until you hear and feel a click, and you've set the trigger to break at a fraction of the weight of its normal setting. I went from having a three-pound













Top: The CZ 550 features a single-set trigger, which is pushed forward to achieve a lighter trigger pull, helping you make those long-range shots.

Center: The 550's three-position safety allows the shooter to unload the rifle without having to put it in Fire mode.

Bottom: Good glass is a must for long-range shooting. The 4.5-14X Zeiss was crystal clear and took adjustment very well.

trigger pull to one that was two pounds lighter. In this mode, there is virtually no creep and very little overtravel. It is a feature that long-range shooters have always benefited greatly from, especially in a prone. Be sure and check that the safety is engaged before pushing the trigger forward to ward off the effects of Mr. Murphy and his entourage of potential tragedies. Even in the normal setting, the CZ trigger is a crisp and clean affair. Regardless of your preference, you should experience no issues with trigger pull in either mode.

The CZ 550 is equipped with a three-position safety on the bolt side of the action. Forward is Fire (revealing a small red dot indicator); the middle position is Safe, preventing the trigger from firing but allowing the shooter to work the bolt to unload the rifle safely; and the rearward position blocks both the bolt and the trigger. The safety has a positive feel and is located in a

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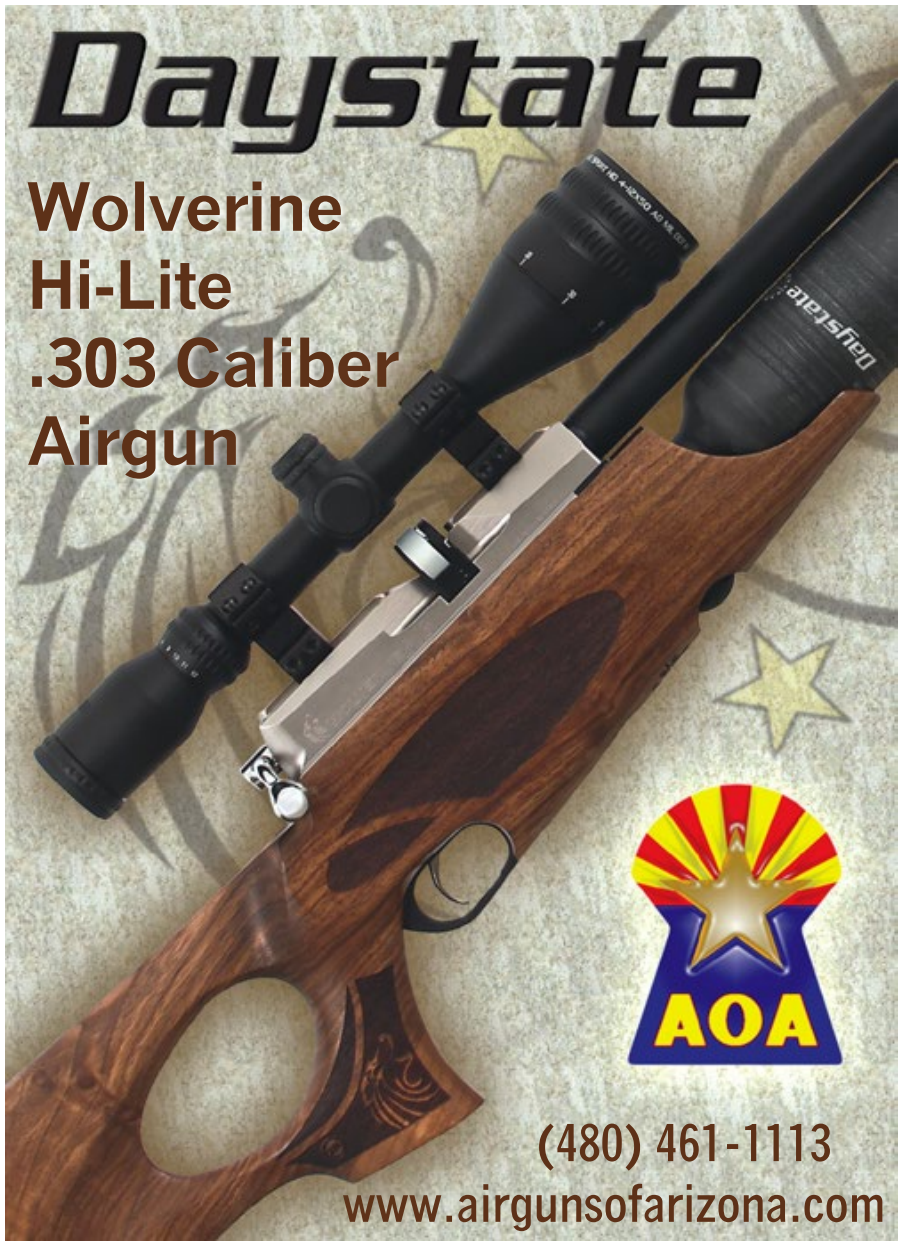




PHOTO: JD FIELDING PHOTOGRAPHY

spot where the shooter can easily feel it without taking eyes off the target.

For optics on my rifle, I used a Zeiss Conquest 4.5-14x44 MC equipped with a #20 Z-Plex reticle. I mounted it in a set of high rings to give proper scope alignment with the high comb of the Manners stock. This scope gave plenty of eye relief, with the crystal-clear image that Zeiss is famous for, and even with a 1-inch maintube, it offered plenty of light transmission. The parallax adjustment made for crisp focus of long-range objects, and the top-end magnification of 14X would make a sensible choice for sane shooting distances without sacrificing much on the lower end. At 17½ ounces, the scope added a bit of weight to the package, but, overall, it maintained a nice center of balance to give the rifle a natural rise to the shoulder.

The new CZ 550 Sonoran displayed accuracy that will work for almost any American hunter, but it's worth making sure the barrel is broken-in first.

At the bench, the CZ really came into its own. Factory loads produced a respectable level of accuracy, hovering between 1 MOA and sometimes a bit more. With handloads, the rifle revealed its true potential. The Massaro Ballistic Laboratories 140-grain Hornady boattail, my handload bullet, printed five-shot groups besting at .85 inch. A Thorne Customs handload printed exactly 1 MOA with 130-grain Speer Hot-Cor bullets, both of which should prove more than accurate enough for any hunting situation. Felt recoil from full-house factory loads was easily manageable, more than likely due to the design of the lightweight Manners stock. The Hornady Custom Lite reduced-recoil ammunition featuring its 120-grain SST bullet proved to be aptly named; felt recoil dropped right off to the point where it would make a good choice for a shooter whose experiences are limited and who wants to develop good skills while being able to kill effectively. Know how your loads perform and this rifle will offer acceptable accuracy given any bullet weight.





PERFORMANCE

LOAD	WEIGHT (GRS.)	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	AVERAGE GROUP (IN.)	BEST GROUP (IN.)
Winchester Power-Point	150	3,080	32	40	.95	.85
Federal Power-Shok RN	150	2,890	65	65	1.55	1.20
Hornady Custom Lite SST	120	2,720	20	20	1.40	1.50
Hornady American Whitetail InterLock	130	3,085	39	32	1.35	1.10
Remington Core-Lokt	130	2,940	35	38	1.30	1.00
Massaro handload, Hornady BTSP	140	2,825	30	30	.85	.75
Thorne handload, Speer Hot-Cor	130	2,940	34	34	1.25	1.10

As mentioned, the single-set trigger was an added bonus, especially at the range. If you're not familiar with using one, I recommend spending some time with it. It is a very touchy affair and can feel as though you've sent a round downrange before you realize you've touched the trigger. However, the single-set trigger is a huge help when trying to wring out the rifle's mechanical accuracy, when assessing load accuracy and for precise zeroing for long-range work.

All said, the CZ 550 Sonoran will make a great companion. While it's not a lightweight mountain rifle, I'd could see it being slung up a sheep mountain or accompanying an elk hunter on forays afield in the autumn. The modern .270 bullet handles almost all of the game in the lower 48 states, possessing plenty of killing power and the accuracy that hunting requires. With premium bullets, even African plains game could be confidently hunted. But it's those Western senderos and whitetail, bean-field hunters for which the Sornoran was made. Give this rifle a long, hard look, and rethink the .270 Winchester. Even in this era of Magnum-Mania, this package is a wonderful combination. G&A

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THE GREAT WAR'S OTHER ENFIELDS

Conceived in Britain and realized in the United States, the rugged Pattern 14/Model 1917 Enfield rifles performed their duty in World War I and beyond.

BY GARRY JAMES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JILL MARLOW

WHEN ONE ENCOUNTERS the name "Enfield," the natural inclination is to envision one of the excellent .303 10-shot repeaters designed by James Paris Lee in the 19th century that reached their height of fame in both World Wars in the guise of the Mark III and Mark 1 SMLEs.

Of course, the Royal Small Arms Factory (RSAF), Enfield, had a history well predating Lee's efforts, producing and designing innovative arms used by Her Majesty's forces (and others) for decades. How, then, did a rifle system ultimately manufactured by those most Yankee of firearms makers — Winchester and Remington — get to be named after John Bull's favorite? Read on, and all will be revealed.

While the famed Model 1903 Springfield has deservedly received nothing but good press over the years, there was a time in its early history when it was overshadowed by another rifle, the U.S. Model 1917 Enfield. During World War I, more doughboys went into action with the '17 than the '03. Uncle Sam, however, wasn't the only one to field this rifle, as thousands of .303 Pattern





A British Tommy with his pattern 1914 Enfield and wearing the Pattern 1914 leather equipment.



An American doughboy toting his Model 1917 with the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) during World War I.

1914 variations of the gun were issued to British troops, and therein lies the beginning of our tale.

Some years before the onset of the Great War in 1914, His Majesty's Small Arms Committee began looking around for a new rifle to replace the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE) then in service. While a number of nice-to-haves were eliminated right at the outset, one that remained was a desire to reduce the British service caliber from .303 to .256 or .276.

Thought the experts, as long as the cartridge was going to be changed, why not come up with an entirely new rifle? After considerable testing, what finally emerged in 1912 was a very non-SMLE-looking .276 repeater with an enclosed magazine and a Mauser-style bolt action with dual front locking lugs that cocked on closing (like the SMLE).



While basically the same rifles aside from caliber, there are subtle differences between the British Pattern 14 (top) and the U.S. Model 1917 Enfield rifle (bottom).



The front sight on both versions was a simple blade protected by a pair of sturdy flanking lugs.



The butts had holes that accommodated cleaning gear.

This new rifle featured a sophisticated rear adjustable ladder-style sight that was secured atop the action between a pair of very sturdy machined lugs. The front sight blade was also flanked by a pair of semi-circular bolsters. Other things such as a sheetmetal buttplate with a trap for cleaning equipment; a crooked, dog-leg bolt handle; a one-piece stock; four slanting finger grooves on the forend; and elimination of the magazine cutoff further differentiated this new design from the issue Lee. Dubbed the Pattern 1913, about 1,250 of these rifles were manufactured at RSAF Enfield between 1912 and 1914 and issued to troops for trials. Some of the first features to go were the four parallel finger grooves.

Some SMLE features were also incorporated. The gun did have long-range dial sights attached to the left side of the stock and the rear left of the receiver, and a brass identification disk was inset into the right side of the butt.

The .276 round itself was totally unlike the .303. With a rimless case, the bullet diameter was .282 as opposed to the .303's .311. Weight was 165 grains versus the 175-grain .303, and velocity was 2,785 feet-per-second as opposed to the larger bullet's 2,440 fps. Trajectory was also flatter.

A 17-inch sword bayonet, similar to the SMLE's Pattern 1907 blade, was designed for the new rifle. As it had a higher muzzle ring so the two would not be confused, the Pattern 13 bayonet had two deep grooves incised in its walnut grip panels. They were made by both Remington and Winchester.

Initial experiences with both the gun and cartridge were satisfying, but the onset of the war caused all of the Select Committee's smallbore planning to be scrapped. Instead, as the P13 was easier to manufacture than the SMLE, it was decided that the new rifle would be altered to handle the service .303 cartridges. Authorities began casting about for domestic gun makers to produce the Pattern 1914 rifle, and while Vickers signed a contract to produce some 100,000 P14s, production difficulties caused cessation of the effort after only a handful of preproduction models were turned out.

Prudently, the British turned to American manufacturers and signed contracts with Winchester Repeating Arms for 400,000

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For commonality with other issue rifles (the 1903 Springfield and SMLE), the Model 1917 and Pattern 14 used the same clips. Appropriately, the M17 chambered .30-'06 (left), and the P14 chambered .303 (right).



Inspired by the British Pattern 1907 bayonet, the Pattern 14 (top) and U.S. Model 1917 (bottom) bayonets will not fit on the SMLE, but they look so similar that their grip panels have been grooved to differentiate them from the earlier blade. Scabbards are similar but have fittings appropriate to Brit and American belt attachments.







The Enfield's bolt is released by a Mauser-style lever on the left side of the receiver. The bolt heads are slightly different to accommodate the P14's (near right) rimmed .303 round and the U.S. rimless .30-'06.







The P14/M17's safety was a simple rocker type sited on the right side of the action where it could easily be manipulated by the shooter's right hand. Down was on Safe; up was Fire.



The Enfield's receiver-mounted rear sights were sophisticated dual-peep arrangements that were adjusted for elevation by a slide that was released by a spring-loaded flange. The sights on the P14 (left) and the M17 (right) were mechanically identical, though graduations were slightly different.

units; Remington Arms Union Metallic Cartridge Company at Ilion, New York, for 1,000,000 rifles; and Remington Arms Co. of Delaware at Eddystone, Pennsylvania, for 2 million P14s. After time was spent tooling up and sorting out manufacturing anomalies, the rifles began to emerge from the plants.

The rifles turned out by the different facilities were virtually identical, with the most noticeable difference being that the Winchester guns and Remington guns from Ilion had longitudinal finger grooves while the Eddystone models sported smooth forends. Rifles made at Winchester had their parts marked with a "W," those at Remington with "RE" and Eddystone guns with an "E." As well, the butts were stamped with encircled "IW," "IR" and "IE" designations, respectively.

The rifles had ladder rear sights with dual peep apertures, adjustable from 200 to 1,650 yards. An integral steel box magazine held five cartridges, which could be loaded with the standard five-round SMLE clip or one at a time. Other features included the previously discussed sheet-steel buttplate with a butt trap that would accommodate the standard British pull-through bore cleaner and an SMLE-style toggle safety located just behind the bolt handle where it could be easily flicked on and off with the thumb of the right hand.

These guns were officially accepted into service on June 21, 1916, and by early 1917, after some production difficulties (especially with stocks) were ironed out, a limited number were sent to the front. While they were well received by the troops, it was felt, with some justification, that the SMLEs fared better in the muddy trenches. Mark IIIs were also now being produced in sufficient numbers and continued to be the frontline arm, with the Pattern 14 being relegated to training and reserve uses. It was found, however, that the Pattern 14's excellent accuracy made it a top

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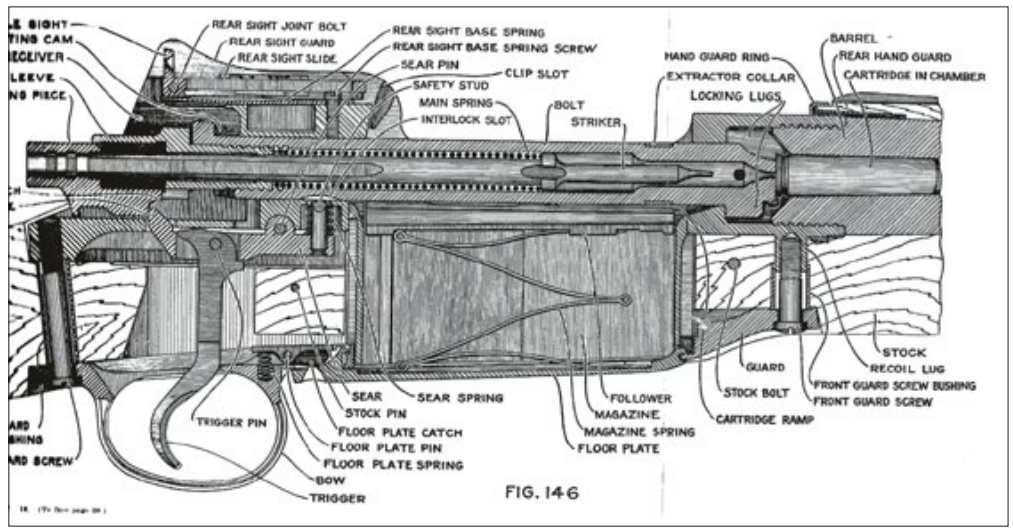
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The P14 action was based on a Mauser design, but it cocked on closing like the British SMLE rifle.





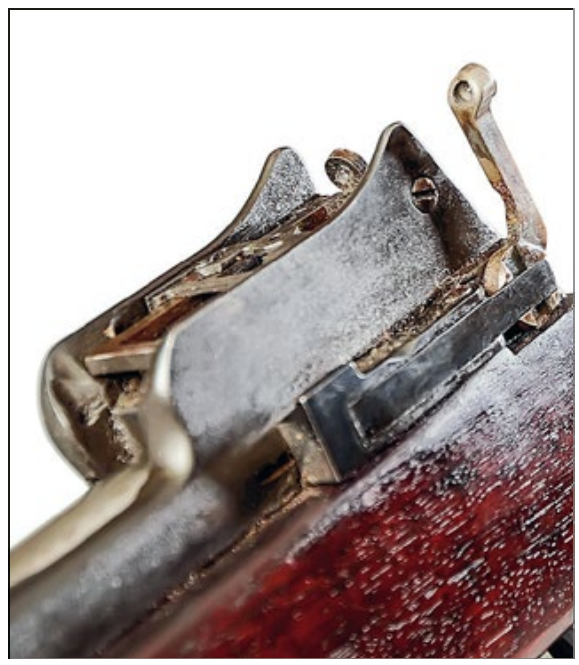


Though this pattern 14 is in excellent condition, the "EY" stock and action marks denote "emergency" or practice use only. The circle "IE" on the butt and "ERA" on the receiver indicate that the rifle was manufactured by Remington, Eddystone. The brass disk is for unit markings.

candidate as a sniper rifle, and though scoped too late to be of any service during the war, it did see subsequent use in this capacity, especially during World War ll. As well, a number of the Pattern 14s were later sent to India, where they saw relatively hard use.

As the United States neared entry into the war, it was realized that the stock of 1903 Springfields was not sufficient to equip an expeditionary force of any size. Model '03s were being manufactured only at Springfield and Rock Island arsenals, and neither facility was, as of yet, on a war footing.

Wisely, the decision was made to modify the Pattern 1914 to handle the Yankee .30-'06 round. Winchester, Remington and Eddystone were already geared up to turn out substantial numbers of P14s, so the slight modifications needed to Americanize





Like early SMLEs, Pattern 14s were fitted with long-range dial sights, the '14's graduated to an optimistic 2,600 yards.

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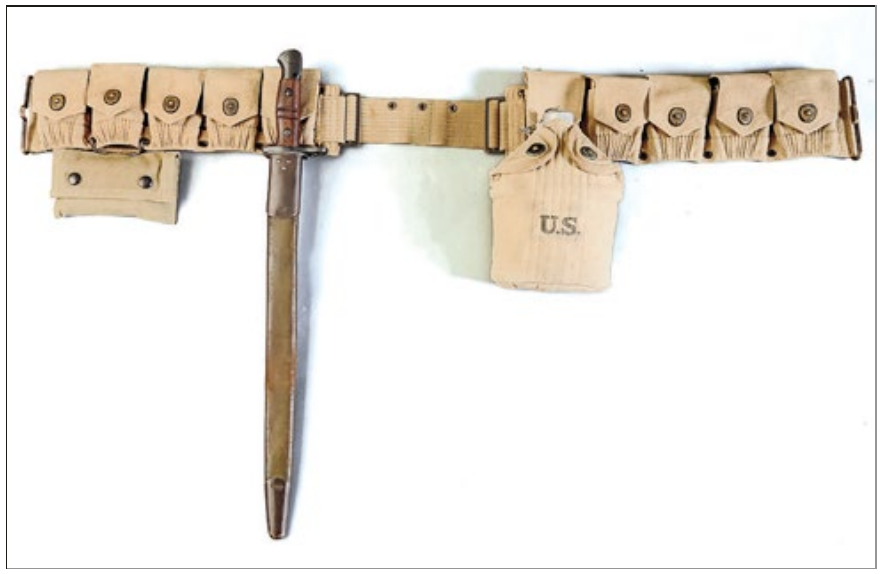
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Though generally, British soldiers wore web P08 gear, shortages caused the development of Pattern 14 leather equipment, shown here. While P14 rifles ultimately saw limited use with U.K. forces, the leather was more widely distributed.



The basic U.S. Model 1910 web cartridge belt, variants of which were used well past World War I.

the guns were not particularly bothersome. Agreements were made with the Brits for them to relinquish plant control and machinery agreements and supply some already-existing parts. For the most part, the Model 1917, as the rifle was designated, was pretty much a ringer for its British cousin. Obviously, the bolt and chamber had to be altered to take the longer, rimless round; the magazine was now able to accommodate six of the rimless .30-'06 rounds; and the receiver was altered to handle the 1903-style five-round clip. Other than that, externally the only obvious difference was the deletion of the long-range dial sight and butt disk and the substitution of U.S. markings for English ones.

Still, there were minor, virtually undetectable alterations so that interchangeability of parts was somewhat limited. Unlike the '14s, the stock on all M17s had finger grooves. While production on 1903s was stepped up, the output of Springfield and Rock Island

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Model 17 receiver, etc., markings showing the Remington manufacturer's name and U.S. ordnance bomb.

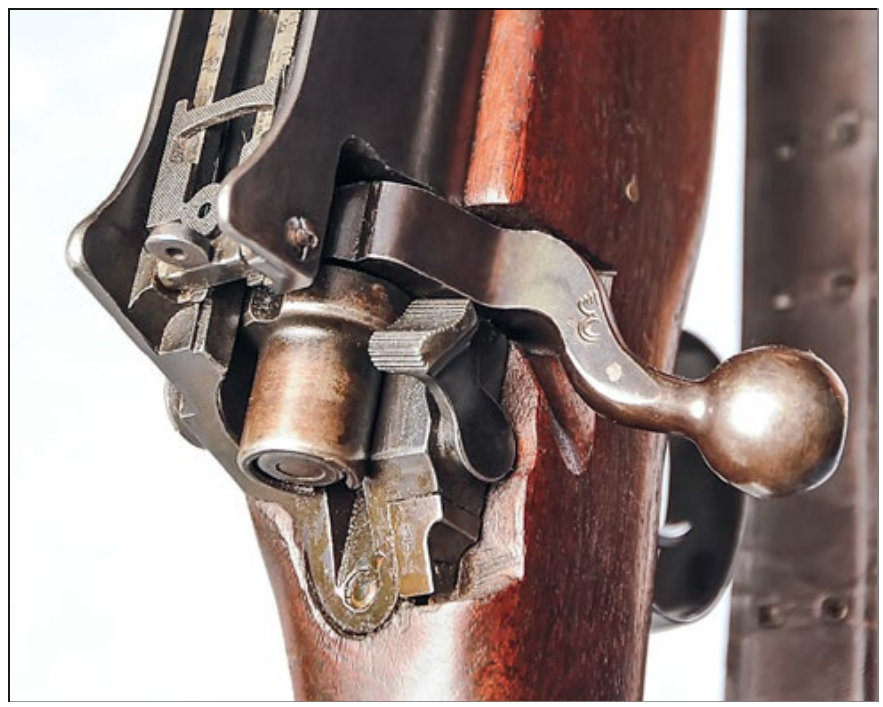
was ultimately only about 15 percent of that of Winchester, Remington and Eddystone. By war's end, more than 2 million Model 1917s had been manufactured, making them the American soldier's most-used battle rifle. Like the British, American ordnance officials recognized the gun's adaptability to the sniping role, and versions with several types of scopes and mounts were adapted.

Though it was well accepted, not all soldiers felt that the 1917 was on par with the 1903 either in the looks or handling department. For one thing, the 1917 was heavier by almost a pound, was slightly longer and did not have the sleek look or necessarily the agreeable handling characteristics of the '03.

A few years back, I interviewed American First World War Medal of Honor recipient Alvin York's son, Andrew, in Pall Mall, Tennessee. He told me that, despite the fact that York's unit, the 82nd Infantry Division, had been issued 1917s, "Daddy" didn't like the rifle's peep rear sight setup, preferring the 1903 Springfield's notch, which was closer to some of the rifles he used in hunting back home. According to Andrew, his father swapped his issue M17 for a 1903, and it was with that rifle that he performed his amazing exploits during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in 1918, an assertion still hotly debated by many Great War buffs.

With the end of World War l, Pattern 1914s and Model 1917s were returned to stores. However, upon the outbreak of the Second World War, they were returned to service in limited capacities. In Britain, for instance, the P14 Enfield became a favorite with Home Guard units.

In the interwar years from 1921 to 1940, Remington produced



The dog-leg-shaped bolt was a distinctive feature of the P14/M17 as well as a reminiscence on some later Remington sporting rifles.

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James found both Enfields to be accurate, robust shooters. Ejection with either .303 or .30-'06 rounds was positive and sure.

a sporter version of the Model 1917. The Model 30 was offered in three grades and a wide spectrum of calibers, the standard 30A rifle, a 30R carbine and a 30S deluxe sporter. The gun basically used the M1917 action (complete with the crooked bolt handle). Stocks were streamlined (checkered on the 30A and 30S, finger-grooved on the 30R), and the rear sight protectors were moved and civilian sights added.

As well, for years surplus M1917s were favored arms for sporterizing and rechambering to some of the magnum rifle rounds, though today, with the collector value of unaltered '14s and '17s steadily climbing, this practice has been somewhat abated.

Over the years, I've shot P14s and M17s a good deal and can give them nothing but high praise. While not as prepossessing as some other military rifles of the period and a smidgen on the clunky side, in both .303 and .30-'06 the rifles are accurate, reliable and for the most part a pleasure to shoot.

Given my choice, would I prefer to have been issued a Mark III SMLE or 1903 Springfield? To be honest, yes. They are two rifles I consider to be right at the apex of bolt-action military design. Then again, I wouldn't have felt short-changed if I'd been given a Pattern 1914 or Model 1917 either. One could have had to make much more challenging choices in life, I suppose. G&A

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Colt Single Action Army



The Colt Single Action Army is the classic six-shooter, but we never recommend carrying it with more than five.



The exquisite bluing and color case-hardening is deserving of the rampant Colt logo on the grips.

Colt Single Action Army	
Type:	Single action, revolver
Caliber:	.357 Magnum (tested), .45 Colt (other chamberings available)
Capacity:	6 rds. (5 recommended for safety)
Barrel:	5.5 in. (4.75 and 7.5 in. available)
Length:	11 in. (5.5-in. barrel)
Weight:	44 oz. (5.5-in. barrel)
Finish:	Blue with case-hardened frame (full nickel finish available)
Grips:	Rubber
Sights:	Blade (front), integral notch (rear)
Trigger:	3 lbs. (tested)
MSRP:	N/A (Contact a Colt dealer)
Manufacturer:	Colt's Manufacturing Company 800-962-2658, colt.com

THE PRACTICAL PEACEMAKER

A GUN IS A TOOL. Like a hammer, it's a soulless instrument used to solve problems. Dad's old lever gun or that Luger Grandpa brought back from the Bulge might have sentimental value, but its significance is forged of blood relation; your kinsman who handled it established the nostalgic appeal you cherish. Some guns are innovative, some interesting and some forgettable, but they're all just tools — with the exception of one.

For as long as you've been seeking oxygen, craftsmen in Hartford, Connecticut, have been breathing life into a gun that, after more than 140 years, refuses to be exiled into antiquity. It's one that was dropped on the banks of the Little Big Horn in 1876. In Arizona, Bat Masterson wielded it with retribution in 1878 and Wyatt Earp with ease and efficiency in 1881. The Rough Riders carried it up San Juan Hill, and it rode the range, the veldt and the gold fields with Major Burnham. Americans carried it to Europe during World War I, and Patton carried it there and to Africa during World War II. In 1969, John Wayne carried one to his only Oscar win.

For as long as young men have fantasized about gunfighters and saloons, toy versions of this gun have graced their hands. The Colt Single Action Army (SAA) revolver is a handgun that embodies the American spirit like no other. It's considered a man's gun because almost every man has dreamed of one. It's an American man's gun because when ruggedness and manliness were American qualities that mattered, it was the gun real men carried.

Wrap your hand around a Colt SAA, and you can almost feel an electric charge. Your thumb instinctively finds the hammer, and as it's retracted, you hear the unmistakable four clicks that signify this is, by God, a *C-O-L-T*. It's the



When cocking the hammer of a real SAA, four clicks let you know it's a *C-O-L-T.*

first sound Custer, Earp, Masterson, Patton and Wayne heard every time they thumbed that hammer, and for many an outlaw, gangster, road agent or ruffian, it's the last sound they ever heard.

Some will profess that with 21st-century wondernines, ultra-compact mouse guns and accessory-railed tactical blasters, there's no place for a single-action revolver. You cannot argue that Colt's SAA is the premier fighting pistol, but that's not the point. The 1873 Colt's SAA — or Peacemaker, as it's been called — hasn't existed for a century and a half because it's the preeminent fighting pistol. It's a work of art with a history and attachment to America. It's also fun to shoot.

Most folks don't just go out and buy a Colt SAA on a whim. The acquisition of Colt's Peacemaker is, in most cases, the cure for an aching desire. Hard-working Americans generally don't carry around enough pocket money to just pick one up, and not everyone can afford one. They're not impulse buys or mass-produced gizmos like you'll find on the counter at every gun shop. They're hand-fitted mechanical sculptures created from forged steel. The hands of men shape them, and their sweat is impregnated within. Maybe money should not be a consideration. Samuel Colt once wrote, "Money is a trash I have always looked down upon that I never had handy to know how to appreciate it." Funny thing: By the early 1850s, Colt had become one of the richest men in America.

Without exception, every time one of us handle Colt's single action it fuels a fire burning within. It seems that there have always been other, more practical guns we needed, guns for personal protection and hunting, guns far less expensive. But at the half-century mark, a man

PHOTOS: SEAN UTLEY



Color case-hardening like this is a process as its name implies. Many copies simply colorize or stain the steel to mimic this effect.

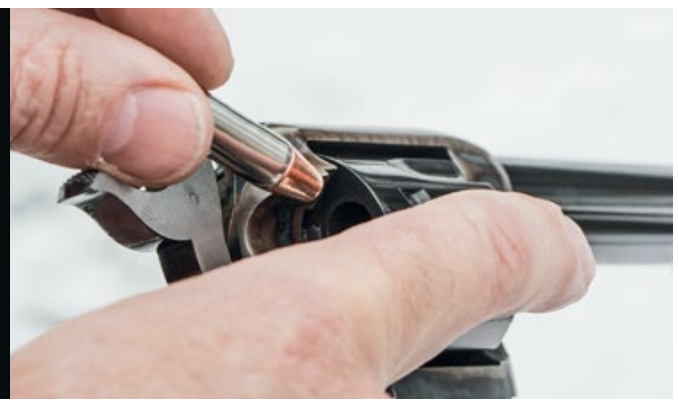


The six-shot cylinder of the Colt's Single Action Army is easy to remove for cleaning.

realizes he only lives once, and sometimes you owe yourself a present such as this 5½-inch-barrel Artillery Model chambered for .357 Magnum. Regardless of barrel length or caliber, gorgeous case-hardening and deep, dark bluing and hand fitment of parts are standard with every one.

There is something even more special about one that is yours. After a long session of fondling, the next purchase is usually a holster. G&A ordered the popular Galco strongside Western holster ($87) and slid it onto the company's 1880's leather cartridge belt ($130). That's the type of rig an SAA is supposed to ride in. Then, we went to the range.

At 10 yards, it put bullets very near point of aim with .38 Special and .357 Magnum loads, and we were able to punch five-shot groups measuring about 2 inches. Groups were similar from the bench at 25 yards, but the point of impact was a little left and high. This is common with just about every Colt's SAA we picked up. (We had three.)



With practice, a Colt's SAA can be loaded with the left or right hand. G&A recommends you don't use your firing hand.

After the necessary load testing, the G&A staff stepped





PERFORMANCE

LOAD	WEIGHT (GRS.)	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	AVERAGE GROUP (IN.)	BEST GROUP (IN.)
.38 SPECIAL						
Remington UMC MC	130	799	64	27	2.06	1.19
Black Hills CN Lead	158	799	21	10	1.89	1.77
DoubleTap Hardcast	158	1,048	58	23	3.11	2.59
.357 MAGNUM						
Federal JHP	125	1,485	62	25	1.52	1.40
Federal Castcore	180	1,175	43	18	2.72	1.83

Notes: Chrono results were established by firing 10 shots over a Shooting Chrony positioned 10 feet from the muzzle. Average Group is the result of five five-shot groups fired with each load from a sandbag rest at 25 yards.

away from the bench. Soon, we were standing in a pile of brass that would make a handloader's knees weak, and we consistently put five shots into a 6-inch circle at 25 yards. That evening, a Ballistol wipe-down brought back the out-of-the-box luster. The next day, another pile of empty cases.

You don't have to own a horse, be a cowboy or fantasize about a shootout on the streets of Dodge City to enjoy the experience. They remain a viable defensive arm if for no other reason than they meet the "must have a gun" requirement. Surprisingly, they can be fired with intimidating rapidity with two-handed operation when the support-hand thumb is used to cock the revolver. Due to their safe single-action mode of operation and generally good triggers, they make great trail guns for hikers, hunters and those on wilderness excursions. While the original .45 Colt chambering might be the most popular for the modern man, the .38 Special/.357 makes more sense and is capable for medium-size game and all-size bad guys while also being a joy to shoot for nearly anyone.

Historically, the SAA is Colt's (and possibly the world's) most iconic and successful handgun. Between 1873 and today, it was only out of production for a brief period from the beginning of World War II to 1955. As much as has been written about the SAA and as long as it has been around, an unresolved debate continues, and that's whether it is a left- or a right-hand gun. The truth is, it's both.

Some claim Samuel Colt was left-handed, but he died (in 1862) long before the SAA was introduced. However,



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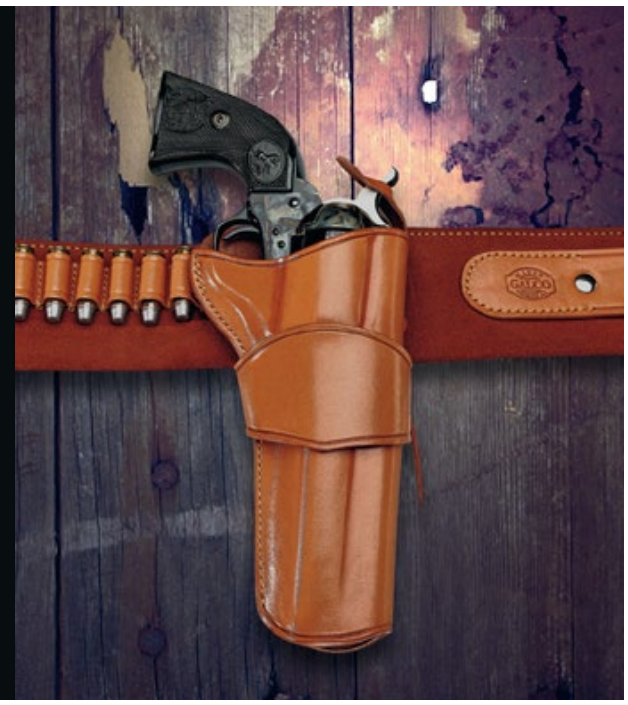
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There are many fine holsters for the Colt SAA. Though named the 1880's Holster, Galco's saddle-leather Western rig is styled to those worn in American Western films during the 1950s and '60s.

PHOTO: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

he was alive and well when the cap-and-ball Colt Walker and 1st, 2nd and 3rd Model Dragoons were produced. They were configured with a cut-out on the right side, making them difficult to cap when held in the right hand. Just as influential, these handguns were designed as cavalry horse pistols, and many troopers wore their saber so it could be drawn and wielded by the right hand with the pistol holstered butt forward on the right side for left-hand access. Ultimately, with the realization that right-handed troops shot better with their right hand, the cavalry or reverse draw was instituted.

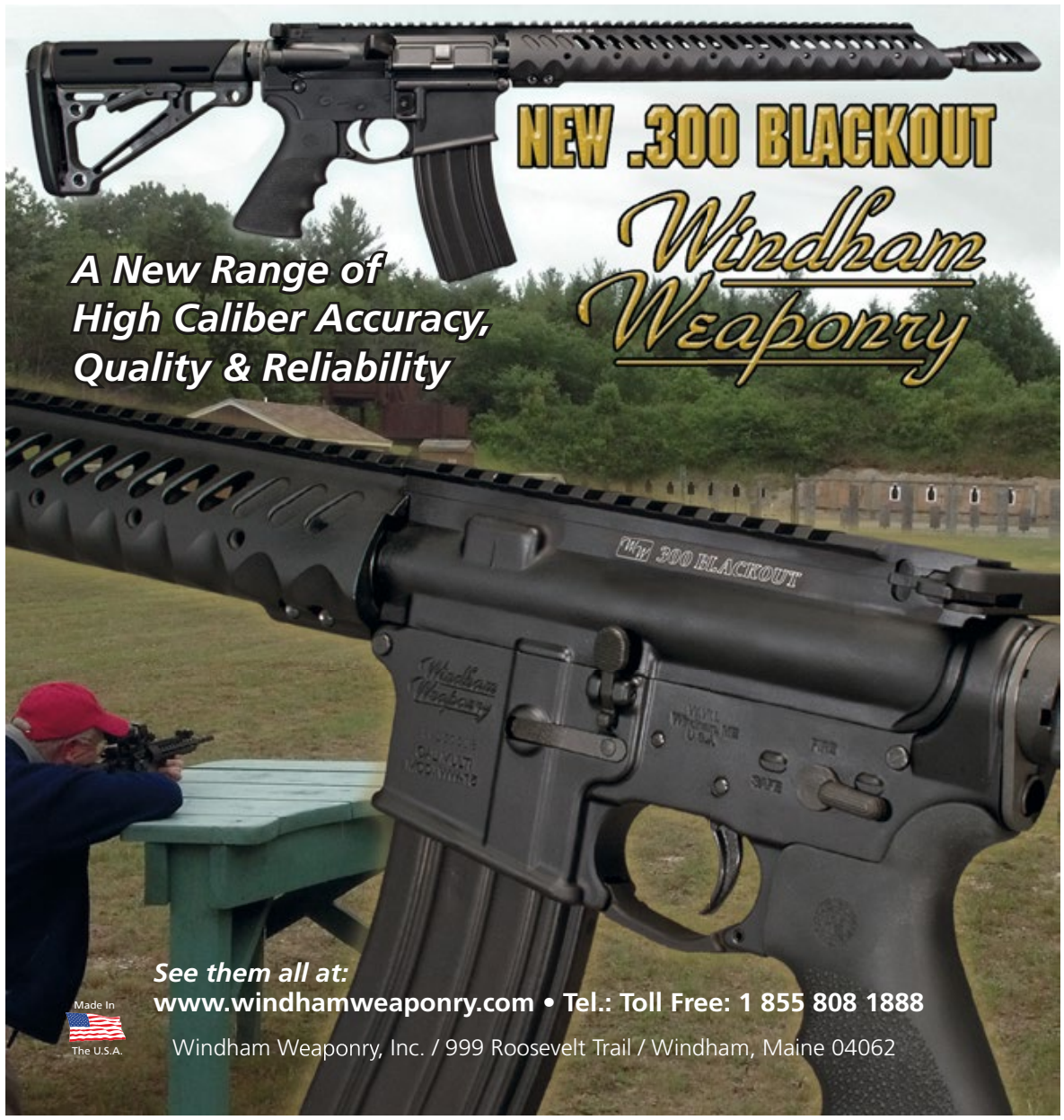
With the loading gate on the right side of a Single Action Army, some right-handed shooters find it easier to switch the SAA to the left hand for loading and unloading. We prefer to keep a handgun in the hand that will be shooting it, and open the gate with the shooting thumb, rotate and control the cylinder with our trigger finger and load with the left hand. Essentially, the same procedure is used for unloading. Whether you're right- or left-handed doesn't matter; it's safe to say that the Colt SAA is ambidextrous.

Colt offers a dozen standard models of the SAA. You have the option of color case-hardening and blued steel or full nickel plating. Available barrel lengths are 4¾, 5½ and 7½ inches in either .357 Magnum or .45 Colt. For a little more jingle, there are lots more options. Colt's Custom Shop has been granting special requests for as long as the Single Action Army has been in existence. For example, on July 24, 1885, Bat Masterson penned the following letter to Colt:

"Gents, Please send me one of your Nickel plated Short .45 Caliber revolvers. It is for my own use and for that reason I would like to have a little Extra pains taken with it. I am willing to pay the Extra for Extra work. Make it very easy on the trigger and have the front Sight a little higher and thicker than the ordinary pistol of this Kind. Put on a gutta percha handle and send it as soon as possible. Have the barrel about the same length that the ejecting rod is.

Truly yours
W.B. Masterson"

Colt's still offers many of those





Regardless of the barrel length, all Colt Single Action Army revolvers have a front sight that is integral to the barrel. It is narrow and can be difficult to see in diminished light.



If there is a detractor to the Colt SAA, it's the fine rear sight notch. In the best of light, it is too narrow and hard to see. In low light, it can seem to be invisible. Originally produced between 1890 to 1989, and recently reintroduced, Colt's New Frontier addresses this issue with a flattop design and an adjustable rear sight.

same custom alterations, to include additional chamberings such as .38-40, .44-40 and .44 Special. You can also specify a bird's-head grip, special grip materials, gold or silver plating, even engraving.

You'll likely own lots of guns during your lifetime. With time, there'll be some your memory will overlook, but you'll never forget your first Colt SAA. Sitting around a campfire, a man might tell you about using his M9 to fend off terrorists. Another might describe how his duty revolver once saved him from a felon. There'll be a story about a striker-fired auto never malfunctioning and another about a match won with a custom 1911. Let them regale you. When they're done, pull your Colt from its leather, thumb the hammer back to its second notch, open the loading gate, and slowly slide the cartridges into the palm of your hand. Then, place the Colt on the table.

As mentioned earlier, G&A received three samples, and each was purchased at full value. An SAA sent to us for review will never be returned to Colt. G&A

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2015 30 MARCH

- Have you seen a flame lick the end of a suppressor after high-volume shooting? Guns & Ammo has this phenomenon captured in high definition as Patrick Sweeney runs an AR until it glows, steams and smokes. Things get hot.
- Two new guns hitting the market are highlighted: Smith & Wesson's compact M&P22 pistol and SIG Sauer's 556 in 7.62x39, a cartridge that is recently regaining considerable momentum among shooters.
- This week's show is finished off with a couple of compact personal defense guns as we look at good ways to protect yourself.

2015 6 APRIL

- Rock Island Armory has a new compact .380 pistol nicknamed the "Baby Rock."
- G&A looks at Hornady's new handgun load, then a new stainless .45 1911 is profiled.
- G&A columnist and co-host Kyle Lamb discusses his military experience with Beretta's M9 pistol.
- Suppressed ARs are also examined.

2015 13 APRIL

- G&A contributors reported from the 2015 SHOT Show that suppressors continue to be gaining people's awareness, and in this special report, our staff addresses "wet" versus "dry" suppressor usage.
- This week's show concludes with a mix-and-match featuring several Beretta M9s by interchanging their parts, a component the U.S. Army demanded when it was in the process of awarding the first contract in 1985.

2015 20 APRIL

- G&A's May-issue cover story, the Springfield Armory XD Mod.2 pistol, is testfired for the camera. The XD line has been incredibly successful across the last 15 years, and now the company introduces this.
- Ruger's new SR-556 carbine appeals to end users in both features and price.
- SIG Sauer just launched a highly anticipated P220 chambered for the powerful 10mm.
- Tom Beckstrand welcomes Greg Stube as the two U.S. Army veterans talk combat and how one pistol played a major role.

2015 27 APRIL

- Cutting-edge optics have a place on "Guns & Ammo TV"; this week the staff takes a look at a new offering from Leupold.
- Smith & Wesson has expanded its Performance Center under the watchful eye of director Tony Miele, and we'll be profiling some of the unbelievable craftsmanship on pistols, revolvers and ARs.
- Can a suppressor be tuned? Here's your opportunity to listen to resident experts discuss this very topic.
- And finally, we close out this week's show talking about Beretta's 100 years in the semi-automatic pistol industry.

AIR TIMES ARE EASTERN

Monday 9:00 p.m.
Monday 11:00 p.m.
Tuesday 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday 6:30 a.m.



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Women are buying guns that best fit their needs and bodies, not those that fit in the traditional view of what a woman should have.

& Women Guns

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) recently released its comprehensive report, "Women Gun Owners: Purchasing, Perceptions and Participation." Go online as G&A analyzes the topics in a four-part series. The results fly in the face of common public stereotypes.

GunsandAmmo.com/women-guns

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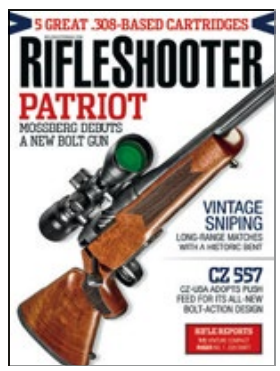
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SUPER COUPON!

6" DIGITAL CALIPER

PITTSBURGH

LOT NO. 47257
61585/62387

Includes two 1.5V SR44 button cell batteries.



$9.99 REG. PRICE $29.99

SAVE 66%

Item 47257 shown

77735197

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LOWEST PRICES EVERYDAY



550 Stores Nationwide

WOW SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating ★★★★★

44", 13 DRAWER INDUSTRIAL QUALITY ROLLER CABINET



- Weighs 245 lbs.

AWARD WINNING QUALITY

SAVE $340

Item 68784 shown

$359.99

$389.99

US★GENERAL PRO

LOT NO. 68784 69387/62270/62591

REG. PRICE $699.99

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77772485

SUPER COUPON

FREE

WITH ANY PURCHASE

3-1/2" SUPER BRIGHT NINE LED ALUMINUM FLASHLIGHT



ITEM 69052 69111/62522/62573

Item 69052 shown

$6.99 VALUE

LIMIT 1 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in-store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/7/15. Limit one FREE GIFT coupon per customer per day.

77780002

SUPER COUPON!

20-60 x 60mm SPOTTING SCOPE WITH TRIPOD

Gordon



SAVE 42%

LOT NO. 94555

$39.99

REG. PRICE $69.99

77749949

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SUPER COUPON!

500 LB. CAPACITY ALUMINUM CARGO CARRIER



SAVE $70

LOT NO. 92655 69688 60771

Item 92655 shown

Haul-Master

$79.99 REG. PRICE $149.99

77765452

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SUPER COUPON!

9 PIECE FULLY POLISHED COMBINATION WRENCH SETS

PITTSBURGH

SAVE 62%



SAE LOT NO. 42304/69043

METRIC LOT NO. 42305/69044

YOUR CHOICE!

Item 42304 shown

$5.64

$8.99

REG. PRICE $14.99

77774845

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WOW SUPER COUPON

2.5 HP, 21 GALLON, 125 PSI VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC



SAVE $70

Item 67847 shown

LOT NO. 67847 61454/61693

$149.99

REG. PRICE $219.99

77738487

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WOW SUPER COUPON

2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL

NEW

LOT NO. 68146/61258 61297/61840



Item 61258 shown

SAVE $100

BADLAND

$49.99

REG. PRICE $149.99

77761945

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SUPER COUPON!

MAGNESIUM FIRE STARTER

LOT NO. 66560 69457



SAVE 60%

$1.99 REG. PRICE $4.99

Item 66560 shown

77772194

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SUPER COUPON!

AMMO BOX

Bunker Hill Security



LOT NO. 61451

SAVE 50%

$4.99 REG. PRICE $9.99

77765237

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SUPER COUPON!

60", 4 DRAWER HARDWOOD WORKBENCH

WINDSOR DESIGN

LOT NO. 93454 69054/62603



Item 93454 shown

SAVE $110

$139.99

REG. PRICE $249.99

77767264

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SUPER COUPON!

HIGH LIFT RIDING LAWN MOWER / ATV LIFT

Item 61523 shown



PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

LOT NO. 61523 60395 62325/62493

NEW

- 300 lb. Capacity

SAVE $60

$89.99

REG. PRICE $149.99

77769972

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SUPER COUPON!

SAVE 60%

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE LOW-PROFILE CREEPER

Tools sold separately.



Item 2745 shown

LOT NO. 69262 2745/69094 61916

- 300 lb. Capacity

$19.99

REG. PRICE $49.99

77770832

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SUPER COUPON!

10 FT. x 10 FT. POPUP CANOPY



SAVE OVER $42

LOT NO. 69456 62384 62513

HFT

Item 62384 shown

$57.15

$69.99

REG. PRICE $99.99

77748502

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SUPER COUPON!

HARDY POWDER-FREE NITRILE GLOVES PACK OF 100



Item 68498 shown

- 5 mil. thickness

YOUR CHOICE!

$6.49

REG. PRICE $11.99

MEDIUM LOT NO. 68496 61363

LARGE LOT NO. 68497 61360

X-LARGE LOT NO. 68498 61359

SAVE 45%

77757148

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SUPER COUPON!

1/2" ELECTRIC IMPACT WRENCH

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS



LOT NO. 68099/45252 69606/61173

Item 68099 shown

SAVE 45%

$37.99 REG. PRICE $69.99

77762621

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SUPER COUPON!

1195 LB. CAPACITY 4 FT. x 8 FT. HEAVY DUTY FOLDABLE UTILITY TRAILER

Haul-Master

SAVE $140

- DOT certified



Item 90154 shown

LOT NO. 90154/62170

$259.99

REG. PRICE $399.99

77780601

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SPENT CASES



RACEGUNNER

MICKEY FOWLER is shown using a heavily customized revolver fitted with a heavy bull barrel optimized for low-recoiling .38 Specials. The vintage Aimpoint Electronic sight was a detachable red dot aiming system new to the U.S. market in 1976. It was always very popular with action-pistol shooters, particularly in the Bianchi Cup matches where competitors were encouraged to use advanced technology in gaming this event.

The Bianchi Cup was created by former police officer and holster maker John Bianchi; Ray Chapman, one of the original "Combat Masters"; and Richard Nichols, who worked with Bianchi. The first Bianchi Cup, in 1979, was won by Ron Lerch, but Fowler would take home the title in 1980, 1981 and 1982. Fowler would later win his fourth and final title 14 years later in 1996, which required him to best an incredible ensemble of action-pistol legends such as Doug Koenig, Bruce Piatt, Rob Leatham and John Pride. G&A

M&P
by Smith&Wesson

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FEEL PERFORMANCE BACKED BY OUR LEADERSHIP IN MODERN SPORTING RIFLES. PLUS A LIFETIME SERVICE POLICY THAT LETS YOU SET YOUR SIGHTS ON JUST ONE THING – MORE ADRENALINE.

** TARGET EFFECT DRAMATIZED*



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Unequaled Quality. Unmatched Performance.

The Super Carry Ultra+™ .45 ACP has a 3-inch barrel for easy concealment and a full-length grip with round heel for additional control and comfortable carry. It weighs just 27 ounces.

All Super Carry pistols have custom features like night sights with cocking shoulder, ambidextrous thumb safety and rounded/blended edges that will not snag.

The Super Carry Pro™ .45 ACP is one of four models with a light weight aluminum frame for easier carry. It has a 4-inch barrel and weighs only 28 ounces.

The Super Carry Pro HD™ .45 ACP is one of three HD models with a stainless steel frame for hard use. It has a 4-inch barrel and weighs 35 ounces.

Super Carry .45 ACP pistols establish a new benchmark for concealed carry and personal defense. Built in the Kimber® Custom Shop,™ no aspect of usability, dependability or performance was compromised. Round heel frames are easier to conceal and more comfortable to carry. Barrels, chambers and triggers are machined to critical match grade dimensions for superior accuracy. Directionally-engaging serrations guarantee fast, positive operation. The KimPro® II finish is self-lubricating and extremely resistant to both moisture and salt. Quality and performance are everything in a carry pistol and Super Carry models deliver both to an unequaled degree. Visit the nearest Kimber Master Dealer and see for yourself.

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